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K DOWNING'S

LETTERS.

BY

MAJOR JACK DOWNING.



JACK DOWNING IN HIS STUDY.

"The author has the richest and most natural Yankee dialect of any writer who has attempted to give the peculiarities of Jonathan. His style is real, attic, and something more than poor orthography."—*New York Morning Despatch*.

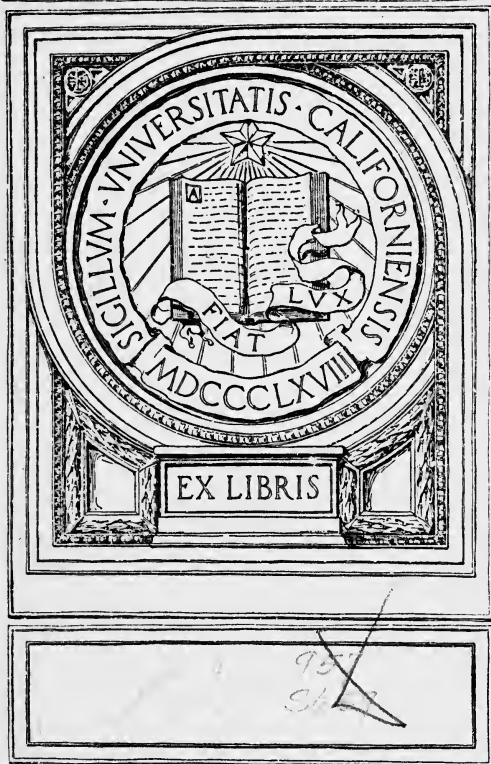
"It is enough to observe that they emanate from the pen of the original author of the Jack Downing Letters. His Yankee stories and style are very diverting, and possess an originality and fidelity which are not discernable in the writings of a numerous horde of imitators."—*The New Yorker*.

Philadelphia:

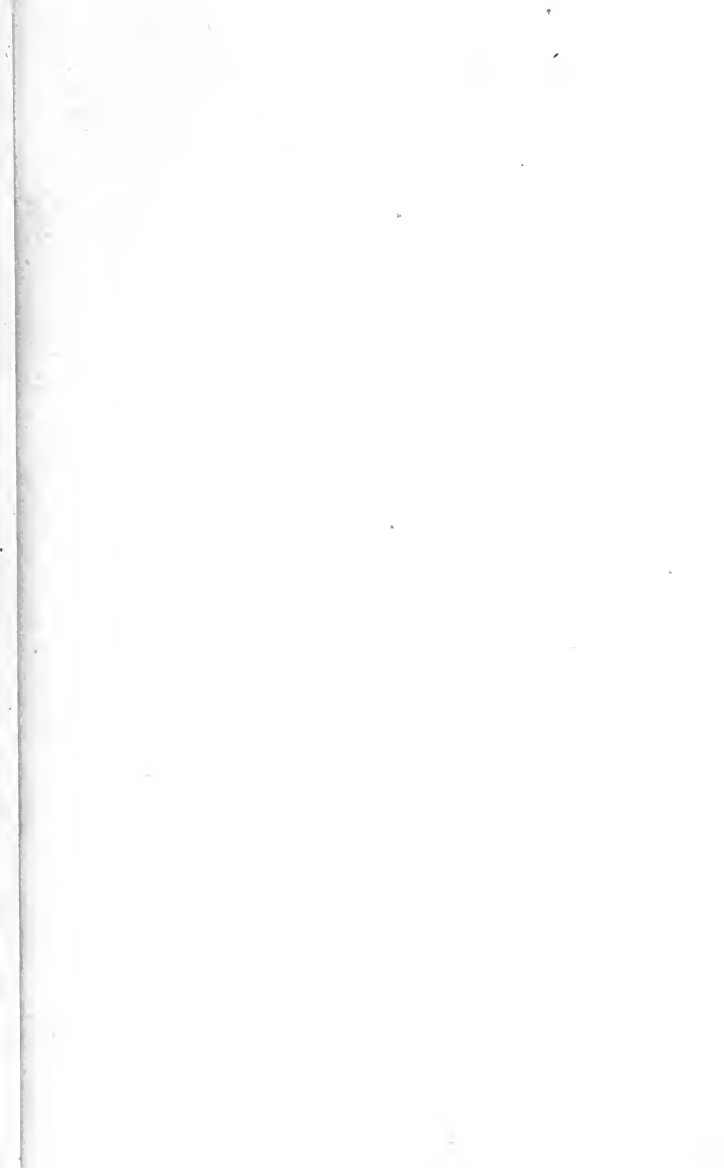
T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS, 306 CHESTNUT STREET.

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# JACK DOWNING'S

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BY

MAJOR JACK DOWNING.



JACK DOWNING, IN, HIS STUDY.

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"There is no doubt that the author of this little volume is the best painter of Yankee peculiarities that ever wrote. He is true to nature and never caricatures; but without caricaturing, is most amusing."—*N. Y. Courier*.  
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Philadelphia:

T. B. PETERSON AND BROTHERS,  
306 CHESTNUT STREET.

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## P R E F A C E .

BY THE AUTHOR.

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I WENT into Burgess & Stringer's book-store 'tother day, under the great Museum Buildings opposite the Astor House, and was kind of shying round, and lookin' at the everlastin' sight of books they've got—as much as two cart-loads on the counter, clear from one end to 'tother, packed down in rows side by side, jest like the bricks of the side-walks in New-York, or of Uncle Joshua's kitchen harth in Downingville, besides as much as twenty cart-loads piled up round on the shelves. I begun at one end of the long counter, and was takin' a kind of raking view of the titles, and when I'd got over about a rod and a half of 'em, along come Mr. Burgess, lookin' as good natured as if he couldn't help it. And says he—

“Major Downing, how are ye? I havn't seen you this long time; where have you kept yourself?”

“O,” says I, “all about in spots, and the rest of the time at home with Polly. But,” says I, “Mr. Burgess, for gracious sake, you don't expect there's folks enough in America to read all these books, do you?”

“Read all these!” says he, “why, Major Downing, here is n't half a mouthful for 'em. There's a plaguy sight more folks in America, Major, than you think for; and the way they swallow down these things is a caution to old rags and paper-makers, I can tell ye. If we should cram every book we've got in the store down

*Smith*

their throats for breakfast, they'd be as hungry as bears for more by eleven o'clock, and cry out for something for a lunch. It's a fact, Major, the public has a dreadful cravin appetite for books ; there's no pacifying of 'em ; and it's the duty of every man that can write his name and spell in words of four syllables, to go to work and help to make books with all his might, so that the public shan't starve."

I looked up at him, and says I, " Mr. Burgess, you are joking."

" Upon my word, I am not," says he, " it's true as preachin. The sufferins of the public for want of books is awful ; and now, Major Downing, you can write, I know you can ; I've hearn tell of your writing years ago, in the Gineral's time ; and now, if you've got one spark of patriotism or common humanity left in your veins, you'll go to work and contribute your mite to keep your countrymen from starving."

" What," says I, " you don't mean for me to put out a book, du ye ?"

" Most certainly I do," says he ; " it's your duty, and you ought to do it immediately,—this very week. There's thousands and thousands that have to go to bed supperless every night for the want of a shilling book, and get up in the morning with nothing to stay their stomachs for the want of a sixpenny pamphlet. Major, it's too bad that the public should be left to suffer so.—Go right to work and get us up a book this week."

" Well," says I, " Mr. Burgess, I don't know as I've got anything to make a book out of, unless it's a few letters I've been writing to Aunt Heziah, about the bobbery you Yorkers always get into about the first of May."



"Well," says he, "less see 'em."

So I pulled 'em out of my pocket and showed 'em to him. He took 'em and looked 'em over, and read along, and his face kept growing shorter and shorter, and at last it burst right open crossways, and his sides was all of a shake, and I thought he was going to swallow the letters right down raw before they was rooked. Says I, "Mr. Burgess, don't, for it's the only copy I've got."

"Just the thing, Major," says he, "as far as it goes; but there aint quite enough for a dose. You must add a little more to it."

"But," says I, "I haint got nothin' ready."

"Never mind," says he, "borrow a few yarns of your old friend that used to print your letters in the Gineral's time, away down east. You've done him many a good turn afore now, and turn about is fair play."

"Very well," says I, "Mr. Burgess, if that's your view of the case, go ahead; the book shall be ready for you to-morrow."

And that's the reason how this book come to light.

MAJOR JACK DOWNING.

## ANOTHER PREFACE.

BY THE PUBLISHERS.

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IN laying before the public a work from so distinguished a personage as the *original Major Jack Downing*, the Publishers feel the importance and the responsibility of the position in which they are placed, and the high duty they owe in the matter both to the present generation and to remote posterity. They would, therefore, enter on their duties with a formality and a seriousness, befitting the occasion, and with a just sense of the delicate relation they hold to the great author and the great public.

We deem it important, in the prefatory remarks which we feel it our duty to make on this occasion, to give a brief history of *Downing literature*; for we contend that there is a Downing literature in the country, of a distinctive character, and that the original Major Jack Downing, was the founder and the head of the school. We feel bound to go into this examination the more, because the matter has been greatly mystified in the eyes of the public, and unless something is done to brush away the clouds of error which have been gathered about it, there is great danger that posterity may never see the subject in its true light.

To enter at once, therefore, into the merits of the case, we find it abundantly proved from authentic

records, that Major Jack Downing was born in Downingville, in the State of Maine. The precise location of this now somewhat celebrated village, is described by the Major himself, in the volume of his life and writings, published about ten years ago in Boston, by Lilly, Waite & Co., as being "*jest about in the middle of down east.*" It is a moderate day's ride from Pooduck, leaving Spurwink on the left, and is represented by all travellers who have visited it, as being one of the most delightful villages in the world, and remarkable for the quiet and orderly character of its inhabitants, and their hearty and unaffected hospitality to strangers.

In January, 1830, the Major, who was then only plain Mr. Jack Downing, made a sort of a professional visit to Portland, the capital of the State; that is to say, he "loaded up with axe-handles, bean-poles, and so on, hitched on the old horse, and driv down to Portland to sell." Here, a combination of circumstances, most fortunately for the world, drew him into the paths of literature, legislation, and military science. The market was dull, he could not dispose of his wares, and held on two or three weeks, having "put up at Ant Sally's," to see if prices would not improve.

In the mean time, he visited the Legislature of the State, which was then in session in Portland, under remarkable circumstances. The two political parties were so evenly balanced, that both claimed the ascendancy in the Legislature, but neither could obtain it. The House was so nearly divided, that it depended upon one or two contested seats to turn the scale one way or the other. The two parties in the Senate were *exactly* equal in numbers, and it was not known who had been chosen Governor, nor could the votes be

counted till the Legislature was organized. In this state of things the two parties fought valiantly for every inch of ground, and it was *six weeks* after the Legislature met before they succeeded in organizing the government for the year.

Here was the match which fired the magazine of Mr. Downing's intellect. Here his first letter to his friends in Downingville, *the first letter he ever wrote*, went up like a rocket, and shed light over the surrounding country. Here was laid the corner-stone of the temple of Downing literature. As an interesting and important record in the history of letters, and *belles-letters*, in this country, it is deemed highly proper that *that* letter should be here inserted. We have accordingly taken the trouble to procure an exact and authenticated copy, and here it is.

[The first Downing letter ever written.]

Portland, Monday, Jan. 18, 1830.

*To Cousin Ephraim Downing up in Downingville.*

DEAR COUSIN EPHRAIM,—I now take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well, hoping these few lines will find you enjoying the same blessing. When I come down to Portland I didn't think o' staying more than three or four days, if I could sell my load of ax handles, and mother's cheese, and cousin Nabby's bundle of footings; but when I got here I found uncle Nat was gone a freighting down to Quoddy, and ant Sally said as how I shouldn't stir a step home till he come back agin, which wont be this month. So, here I am, loitering about this great town, as lazy as an ox. Ax handles don't fetch nothing, I couldn't hardly give 'em away. Tell cousin Nabby I sold her footings for nine-pence a pair, and took it all in cotton cloth. Mother's cheese come to five-and-sixpence; I got her half a pound of shushon, and two ounces of snuff, and the rest in sugar. When uncle Nat comes home I shall put my ax handles aboard of him, and let him take 'em to Boston next time he goes; I saw a feller tother day, that told me they'd fetch a good price there.—I've been here now a whole fortnight, and if I could tell ye one half I've seen, I

guess you'd stare worse than if you'd seen a catamount. I've been to meeting, and to the museum, and to both Legislators, the one they call the House, and the one they call the Sinnet. I spose uncle Joshua is in a great hurry to hear something about these Legislators; for you know he's always reading newspapers, and talking politics, when he can get any body to talk with him. I've seen him, when he had five tons of hay in the field well made, and a heavy shower coming up, stand two hours disputing with Squire W. about Adams and Jackson, one calling Adams a tory and a fed, and the other saying Jackson was a murderer and a fool; so they kept it up, till the rain began to pour down, and about spoilt all his hay.

Uncle Joshua may set his heart at rest about the bushel of corn that he bet long with the post-master, that Mr. Ruggles would be Speaker of that Legislator, they call the House; for he's lost it, slick as a whistle. As I hadn't much to do, I've been there every day since they've been a setting. A Mr. White of Monmouth was the Speaker the two first days; and I can't see why they didn't keep him in all the time; for he seemed to be a very clever good-natured sort of man, and he had such a smooth pleasant way with him, that I couldn't help feeling sorry when they turned him out and put in another. But some said he wasn't put in hardly fair; and I dont know as he was, for the first day when they were all coming in and crowding round, there was a large fat man, with a round, full, jolly sort of a face, I suppose he was the captain, for he got up and commanded them to come to order, and then he told this Mr. White to whip into the chair quicker than you could say Jack Robinson. Some of 'em scolded about it, and I heard, some in a little room they called the lobby, say 'twas a mean trick; but I couldn't see why, for I thought Mr. White made a capital Speaker, and when *our* company turns out you know the captain always has a right to do as he's a mind to.

They kept disputing most all the time the two first days about a poor Mr. Roberts from Waterborough. Some said he shouldn't have a seat, because he adjourned the town meeting, and wasn't fairly elected. Others said it was no such thing, and that he was elected as fairly as any of 'em. And Mr. Roberts himself said he was, and said he could bring men that would swear to it, and good men too. But notwithstanding all this, when they came to vote, they got three or four majority that he shouldn't have a seat. And I thought it a needless piece of cruelty, for they want crowded, and there was a number of seats empty. But they would have it so, and the poor man had to go and stand up in the lobby.

Then they disputed awhile about a Mr. Fowler's having a seat. Some said he shouldn't have a seat, because when he was elected some of his votes were given for his father. But they were more kind to him than they were to Mr. Roberts; for they voted that he *should* have a seat; and I suppose it was because they thought he had a lawful right to inherit whatever was his father's. They all declared there was no party politics about it, and I don't think there was; for I noticed that all who voted that Mr. Roberts *should* have a seat, voted that Mr. Fowler *should not*; and all who voted that Mr. Roberts *should not* have a seat, voted that Mr. Fowler *should*. So, as they all voted *both* ways, they must have acted as their consciences told them, and I don't see how there could be any party about it.

It's a pity they couldn't be allowed to have two speakers, for they seemed to be very anxious to choose Mr. Ruggles and Mr. Goodenow. They too had every vote, except one, and if they had had *that*, I believe they both would have been chosen; as it was, however, they both came within a humbird's eye of it. Whether it was Mr. Ruggles that voted for Mr. Goodenow, or Mr. Goodenow for Mr. Ruggles, I can't exactly tell; but I rather guess it was Mr. Ruggles voted for Mr. Goodenow, for he appeared to be very glad that Mr. Goodenow was elected, and went up to him soon after Mr. Goodenow took the chair, and shook hands with him as good natured as could be. I would have given half my load of ax handles, if they could both have been elected and set up there together, they would have been so happy. But as they can't have but one speaker at a time, and as Mr. Goodenow appears to understand the business very well, it is not likely Mr. Ruggles will be speaker any this winter. So uncle Joshua will have to shell out his bushel of corn, and I hope it will learn him better than to bet about politics again. If he had not been a goose, he might have known he would loose it, even if he had been ever so sure of getting it; for in these politics there's never any telling which way the cat will jump. You know, before the last September election, some of the papers that came to our town had found out that *Mr. Hunton* would have five thousand majority of the votes. And some of the other papers had found out that *Mr. Smith* would have five thousand majority. But the cat jumped 'tother way to *both* of 'em; for I can't find yet as either of 'em has got *any* majority. Some say Mr. Hunton has got a *little* majority, but as far from five thousand as I am from home. And as for Mr. Smith they don't think he has any majority at all. You remember, too, before I came from home, some of the papers

said how there was a majority of ten or fifteen *national republicans*, in the Legislater, and the other papers said there was a pretty clever little majority of *democratic republicans*. Well, now every body says it has turned out jest as that queer little paper, called the the Daily Courier, said 'twould. That paper said it was such a close rub, it couldn't hardly tell which side would beat. And it's jest so, for they've been here now most a fortnight acting jest like two boys playin see-saw on a rail. First one goes up, then 'tother; but I reckon one of the boys is rather heaviest, for once in awhile he comes down chuck, and throws the other up into the air as though he would pitch him head over heels.

In that 'tother Legislater they call the Sinnet, there has been some of the drollest carryins on that you ever heard of. If I can get time I'll write you something about it, pretty soon. So I subscribe myself, in haste, your loving cousin till death.

JACK DOWNING.

Four days after the date of the above letter, Mr. Downing wrote another letter to his Uncle Joshua, of Downingville, who had in the mean time "loaded up" with turkies and "apple sass," and pushed off to Boston, from which place he addressed the following letter to his nephew in Portland.

*Letter from Joshua Downing, in Boston, to his nephew, Jack Downing, in Portland.*

DEAR NEPHEW,—I left home just after your letter to your cousin Ephraim got there, and I didn't get a sight of your letter to me that you put into the Courier at Portland, until I saw it in the Daily Advertiser in Boston, and I guess Mr. Hale is the only person in Boston who takes that are little Courier, so you was pretty safe about the letter not being seen, as the printer promised you. How I happened to see it here, you will find out before I have got through with this letter. I guess you wont be a little struck up when you find out that I'm in Boston—but I had best begin at the beginning and then I shall get thro' quicker.

After seeing your letter to Ephraim as I said before, I concluded it wouldn't be a bad scheme to tackle up and take a load of turkies, some apple-sauce, and other notions that the neighbors wanted to get to market, and as your uncle Nat would be in Boston with the ax handles, we all thought best

to try our luck there. Nothing happened worth mentioning on the road, nor till next morning after I got here and put up in Elm street. I then got off my watch pretty curiously, as you shall be informed. I was down in the bar room, and tho't it well enough to look pretty considerable smart, and now and then compared my watch with the clock in the bar, and found it as near right as it ever was—when a feller stepped up to me and ask't how I'd trade? and says I, for what? and says he, for your watch—and says I, any way that will be a fair shake—upon that says he, I'll give you *my* watch and five dollars.—Says I, its done! He gave me the five dollars, and I gave him my watch. Now, says I, give me *your* watch—and says he, with a loud laugh, I han't got none—and that kind aturn'd the laugh on me. Thinks I, let them laugh that lose. Soon as the laugh was well over, the feller thought he'd try the watch to his ear—why, says he, it dont go—no, says I, not without its carried—then I began to laugh—he tried to open it and couldn't start it a hair, and broke his thumb nail in the bargain. Won't she open, says he? Not's I know on, says I—and then the laugh seemed to take another turn.

Don't you think I got off the old Britannia pretty well, considrin? And then I thought I'd go and see about my load of turkies and other notions. I expected to have gone all over town to sell my load, but Mr. Doolittle told me if I'd go down to the new market, I should find folks enough to buy all I had at once. So down I goes, and a likely kind of a feller, with an eye like a hawk and quick as a steeltrap for a trade, (they called him a 4th staller,) came up to the wagon, and before you could say Jack Robinson, we struck a bargain for the whole cargo—and come to weigh and reckon up, I found I should get as much as 10s6d more than any of us calculated before I left home, and had the apple-sauce left besides. So I thought I'd jist see how this 4th staller worked his card to be able to give us so good a price for the turkies, and I went inside the market-house, and a grander sight I never expect to see! But it was the 3d staller instead of the 4th, had my turkies all sorted and hung up, and looking so much better that I hardly should know 'em. Pretty soon, a gentleman asked the 3d staller what he asked for turkies? Why, says he, if you want something better than you ever saw before, there's some 'twas killed last night purpose for you. You may take 'em at 9d, being it's you. I'll give you 12 cents, said the gentleman, as I've got some of the General Court to dine with me, and must treat well. I shant stand for half a cent with an old customer, says he. And so they traded ;



and in about the space of half an hour or more, all my turkies went into baskets at that rate. The 4th staller gave me 6d a pound, and I began to think I'd been a little too much in a hurry for trade—but's no use to cry for spilt milk. Then I went up to the State House to see what was going on there; but I thought I'd get off my apple-sauce on my way—and seeing a sign of old clothes bartered, I stepped in and made a trade, and got a whole suit of superfine black broadcloth from top to toe, for a firkin of apple-sauce, (which didn't cost much I guess, at home.)

Accordingly I rigged myself up in the new suit, and you'd hardly known me. I didn't like the set of the shoulders, they were so dreadful puckery; but the man said that was all right. I guess he'll find the apple-sauce full as puckery when he gets down into it—but that's between ourselves. Well, when I got up to the State House I found them at work on the rail road—busy enough I can tell you—they got a part of it made already. I found most all the folks kept their hats on except the man who was talking out loud and the man he was talking to—all the rest seemed to be busy about their own consarns. As I didn't see any body to talk to I kept my hat on and took a seat, and look'd round to see what was going on. I hadn't been setting long before I saw a slick-headed, sharp-eyed little man, who seemed to have the principal management of the folks, looking at me pretty sharp, as much as to say who are you? but I said nothing and looked tother way—at last he touched me on the shoulder—I thought he was feeling of the puckers. Are you a member? says he—sartin says I—how long have you taken your seat? says he. About ten minutes, says I. Are you qualified? says he. I guess not, says I. And then he left me. I didn't know exactly what this old gentleman was after—but soon he returned and said it was proper for me to be qualified before I took a seat, and I must go before the governor! By Jing! I never felt so before in all my born days. As good luck would have it, he was beckoned to come to a man at the desk, and as soon as his back was turned I give him the slip. Jest as I was going off, the gentleman who bought my turkies of the 4th staller took hold of my arm, and I was afraid at first that he was going to carry me to the Governor—but he began to talk as sociable as if we had been old acquaintances. How long have you been in the house, Mr. Smith, says he. My name is Downing, said I. I beg your pardon, says he—I mean Downing. It's no offence, says I, I haven't been here long. Then says he in a very pleasant way, a few of your brother members are to take pot-luck with me to-day, and I should be

happy to have you join them. What's pot-luck, said I. O, a family dinner, says he—no ceremony. I thought by this time I was well qualified for that without going to the Governor. So says I, yes, and thank ye too. How long before you'll want me, says I. At 3 o'clock, says he, and gave me a piece of paste board with his name on it—and the name of the street, and the number of his house, and said that would show me the way. Well, says I, I dont know of nothing that will keep me away. And then we parted. I took considerable liking to him.

After strolling round and seeing a great many things about the State House and the marble image of Gin. Washington, standing on a stump in the Porch, I went out into the street they call Bacon street, and my stars! what swarms of women folks I saw all drest up as if they were going to meeting. You can tell cousin Polly Sandburn, who you know is no slimster, that she needn't take on so about being genteel in her shapes—for the genteelst ladies here beat her as to size all hollow. I dont believe one of 'em could get into our fore dore—and as for their arms—I shouldn't want better measure for a bushel of meal than one of their sleeves could hold. I shant shell out the bushel of corn you say I've lost on Speaker Ruggles at that rate. But this puts me in mind of the dinner which Mr. ——— wants I should help the General Court eat. So I took out the piece of paste board, and began to inquire my way and got along completely, and found the number the first time—but the door was locked, and there was no knocker, and I thumpt with my whip handle, but nobody come. And says I to a man going by, dont nobody live here? and says he yes. Well, how do you get in? Why, says he ring; and says I, ring what? And says he, the bell. And says I, where's the rope? And says he, pull that little brass nub; and so I gave it a twitch, and I'm sure a bell did ring; and who do you think opened the door with a white apron afore him? You couldn't guess jor a week a Sundays—so I'll tell you. It was Stephen Furlong, who kept our district school last winter, for 5 dollars a month, and kept bachelor's hall, and helped tend for General Coombs a training day, and make out muster rolls. We was considerably struck up at first, both of us; and when he found I was going to eat dinner with Mr. ——— and General Court, he thought it queer kind of doings—but says he, I guess it will be as well for both of us not to know each other a bit more than we can help. And says I, with a wink, you're half right, and in I went. There was nobody in the room but Mr. ——— and his wife, and not a sign of any dinner to be seen any where—though I thought

now and then when a side door opened, I could smell cupboard, as they say.

I thought I should be puzzled enough to know what to say, but I hadn't my thoughts long to myself. Mr. ——— has about as nimble a tongue as you ever heard, and could say ten words to my one, and I had nothing to do in the way of making talk. Just then I heard a ringing, and Stephen was busy opening the door and letting in the General Court, who all had their hats off, and looking pretty scrumptious, you may depend. I didn't see but I could stand along side of 'em without disparagement, except to my boots, which had just got a lick of beeswax and tallow—not a mite of dinner yet, and I began to feel as if 'twas nearer supper-time than dinner-time—when all at once two doors flew away from each other right into the wall, and what did I see but one of the grandest thanksgiving dinners you ever laid your eyes on—and lights on the table, and silver candlesticks and gold lamps over head—the window shutters closed—I guess more than one of us stared at first, but we soon found the way to our mouths—I made Stephen tend out for me pretty sharp, and he got my plate filled three or four times with soup, which beat all I ever tasted. I shan't go through the whole dinner again to you—but I am mistaken if it cost me much for victuals this week, if I pay by the meal at Mr. Doolittle's, who comes pretty near up to a thanksgiving every day. There was considerable talk about stock and manufactories, and liabilities, and rimidies, and a great loss on stock. I thought this a good chance for me to put in a word—for I calculated I knew as much about raising stock and keeping over as any of 'em. Says I to Mr. ———, there's one thing I've always observed in my experience in stock—just as sure as you try to keep over more stock than you have fodder to carry them well into April, one half will die on your hands, to a sartinty—and there's no remedy for it—I've tried it out and out, and there's no law that can make a ton of hay keep over ten cows, unless you have more carrots and potatoes than you can throw a stick at. This made some of the folks stare who didn't know much about stock—and Steve give me a jog, as much as to say, keep quiet. He thought I was gitting into a quog-mire, and soon after, giving me a wink, opened the door and got me out of the room into the entry.

After we had got out of hearing, says I to Steve, how are you getting on in the world—should you like to come back to keep our school if I could get a vote for you?—not by two chalks, says Steve—I know which side my bread is buttered better than all that—I get 12 dollars a month and found, and

now and then some old clothes, which is better than keeping school at 5 dollars and find myself, and work out my highway tax besides—then turning up the cape of my *new coat*, says he, I guess I've dusted that before now—most likely, says I, but not in our district school. And this brings to mind to tell you how I got a sight of your letter. They tell me here that every body reads the Boston Daily Advertiser, because there is no knowing but what they may find out something to their advantage, so I thought I would be as wise as the rest of them, and before I got half through with it, what should I find mixed up among the news but your letter that you put into that little paper down in Portland, and I knew it was your writing before I had read ten lines of it.

I hope I've answered it to your satisfaction.

Your respectful uncle,

JOSHUA DOWNING.

P. S. Mr. Topliff says your uncle Nat is telegraphed, but I'm afraid the axe handles wont come to much—I find the Boston folks make a handle of most anything they can lay hold of, and just as like as not they'll make a handle of our private letters, if they should see them.

N. B. You spell dreadful bad, according to my notion—and this proves what I always said, that our district has been going down hill ever since Stephen Furlong left it.

A thing may sometimes be great from the force of circumstances, when intrinsically considered, without the aid of those circumstances, it might not attract unusual attention. It was so in some degree with the first letter of Mr. Downing. Here were the elected representatives of a sovereign State, without law or order, jangling and quarrelling for weeks without being able to choose their own presiding officers, and the whole people were looking on, and holding up their hands in awful consternation, expecting to be left without a government, and to be overwhelmed by the turbulent waves of anarchy and confusion.

At this critical moment the first letter of Mr. Downing fell upon the Legislature "like a thousand of brick." It electrified the people of Portland and the

whole State, as if a flash of lightning had burst upon them out of a clear sky ; it waked up old Boston and set it in a roar ; even the fighting politicians in the Legislature did not fight with half the grit afterwards, for whenever they attempted to throw each other "sky-high," they would think of the "two-boys see-sawing on a rail," and laugh outright in each other's faces.

In short, the Downing literature was planted : the soil was adapted to the seed, and in the nature of things *it was bound to grow*. And it did grow and flourish "like a green bay horse." Mr. Downing had to stay in Portland and write letters all winter ; and then he had to stay and write letters all summer. His popularity went steadily up. He was nominated in Downingville for Governor of the State, and at the fall election received every vote in his native town. Having devoted his valuable services to his own State for something more than a year, his patriotism soared higher, and took a wider range. In May, 1831, having heard of the disastrous explosion and resignation of President Jackson's first Cabinet, with the most heroic devotion to the public interests, Mr. Downing repaired to Washington, with a view of relieving the embarrassments of the President by offering to fill one of the vacant Secretaryships.

Unluckily, however, for the public welfare, before he reached Washington, as he "had to foot it" most of the way, the places were filled by less efficient and less worthy men. Nothing daunted, but inspired by a growing patriotism, Mr. Downing remained at head quarters, determined that the country should have his services, whenever they were wanted. He became acquainted with "the Gineral," and that sagacious and

keen-sighted warrior and statesman soon penetrated and appreciated the high qualities of Mr. Downing. About this time a circumstance occurred which *pinned him* to the General's heart forever.

A new quarrel had broken out among the Cabinet officers. "A lady was in the case," and the quarrel was bitter. Major Eaton challenged Mr. Ingham, Secretary of the Treasury, to settle the matter in a duel; but the latter gentleman declined the honor. Then Major Eaton and a gang of other gentlemen went to Mr. Ingham's house in the evening, and demanded that he should come out. This he declined also. The gang of gentlemen were then preparing to burst open the door and drag him out. At this crisis Mr. Downing mounted Mr. Ingham's door-steps, threw off his hat and coat, rolled up his sleeves, struck his fists together, and told them "to come on, one to time, or all in a bunch, he didn't care which; but before they should break open the door of a peaceable man who was staying in his house as quiet as a lamb, with his wife and children, they should climb over his dead body." This settled the *hash*; for, according to the history of the affair given by Mr. Downing at the time, in a letter to the Portland Courier, "Major Eaton and the whole gang of gentlemen with him turned right about and marched away as still as a pack of whipped puppies."

From this time "the General" hugged Mr. Downing to his bosom and made him his right hand man ever afterwards.

In October, 1831, a dark cloud, full of thunder and war appeared "away down east," hanging over the "disputed territory" in the State of Maine, and President Jackson gave Mr. Downing a Captain's commis-

sion in the Army, with the instructions to raise a company of volunteers in Downingville, and go down to the disputed territory, flog the British and make fair weather. Capt. Downing performed the expedition, and settled the business to the satisfaction of all parties.

Capt. Downing could now receive any thing from the President which he chose to ask, for himself and friends. He was, however, very modest and moderate in his reception of favors, and only allowed the President to appoint that staunch patriot, "uncle Joshua Downing" to the honorable position of Post Master of Downingville; a position which, much to the credit of succeeding administrations, he holds to this day.

In December, 1832, the horrid monster of Nullification raised its head in South Carolina, and threatened to bite off the head of the government. President Jackson, who was always equal to every emergency, at once gave Captain Downing a Major's commission, and told him to take care of South Carolina, and drive Nullification into the Gulf of Mexico. No man understood the nature of Nullification, or how to cure it, better than Major Downing, as was abundantly proved in his celebrated account of carrying a raft of logs over Sebago pond.

It appears, on receiving a major's commission, that Mr. Downing's military ambition was satisfied; for when the President afterwards desired him to take the appointment of colonel in the army, he declined, saying, he much preferred the title of Major. However, it mattered little what his nominal rank might be, he was the master-spirit that sustained the administration of "the General" in those trying times, and carried him safely through the storm of Nullification, the fight with the bank monster, and many other difficulties.

But we find this subject growing on our hands, and the father we go the more prolific it becomes. We did not sit down to write a biography of Major Downing—we trust that important work will be committed to abler and better hands—our object was mainly to throw a little light on the origin and progress of Downing literature, and to correct certain errors which tradition had fallen into, and which were in danger of being perpetuated on the page of history. Suffice it to say here, that on receiving his commission and the orders from the President to “take care of South Carolina,” Major Downing ordered his faithful cousin Sargeant Joel Downing, to repair immediately to Washington with his invincible Downingville company.

Having drawn up his Downingville forces at Washington, the major stood ready at a moment's warning to pounce upon S. Carolina the first instant that Nullification attempted to raise its head against the government; and he used to mount upon the Capitol every day and listen to see if he could hear the guns cracking in South Carolina, for he said the President told him not to strike a single blow till South Carolina struck first.

Luckily, however, Mr. Clay's Tariff Bill put Nullification to sleep, and the Major never had to come to the scratch with the South Carolina monster. The next great movement of the Major was to accompany “the Ginerall” on his famous tour “down east.” In his letter to Cousin Ephraim, March 10, 1833, he informs him that a project of that kind was “a brewin” and says “the President talks of taking a journey down east this summer, and he wants me to go with him, because I'm acquainted there, and can show him all about it. He has a great desire to go as far as Downingville and get acquainted with Uncle Joshua, who



has always stuck by him in all weathers through thick and thin. The President thinks that Uncle Joshua, is one of the republican pillars of New England, and and says he shall always have the post office of Downingville as long as he lives, and his children after him."

April 20th, the Major writes to his old friend of the Portland Courier that the thing is all cut and dried, and he and the General and the two cabinets are going to make a grand tour down east. There was one difficulty in the way which he describes as follows :

"There is some trouble among us here a little, to know how we shall get along among the federalists when we come that way. They say the federalists in Massachusetts want to keep the President all to themselves when he comes there. But Mr. Van Buren says that'll never do ; he must stick to the democratic party ; he may shake hands with a federalist once in awhile if the democrats don't see him, but whenever there is any democrats round, he musn't look at a federalist. Mr. McLane and Mr. Livingston advise him t'other way. They tell him he'd better treat the federalists pretty civil, and shake hands with Mr. Webster as quick as he would with Uncle Joshua Downing. And when they give this advice Mr. Lewis and Mr. Kendall hop right up as mad as march hares, and tell him if he shakes hands with a single federalist while he is gone, the democratic party will be ruined. And then the President turns round to me, and asks me what he had better do. And I tell him that I guess he better go straight ahead, and keep a stiff upper lip, and shake hands with whoever he's a mind to."

Early in June the the grand party got under way, and on the 10th the Major writes to his Uncle Joshua

from Philadelphia, and tells him "we are coming on full chisel." After describing the journey as far as Philadelphia, the Major proceeds as follows :

"They took us up into a great hall this morning as big as a meeting-house, and then the folks began to pour in by thousands to shake hands with the President ; federalists and all, it made no difference. There was such a stream of em coming in that the hall was full in a few minutes, and it was so jammed up round the door that they couldn't get out again if they was to die. So they had to knock out some of the windows and go out t'other way."

The President shook hands with all his might an hour or two, till he got so tired he couldn't hardly stand it. I took hold and shook for him once in awhile, to help him along ; but at last he got so tired he had to lay down on a soft bench covered with cloth, and shake as well as he could, and when he couldn't shake, he'd nod to em as they come along. And at last he got so beat out, he couldn't only wrinkle his forehead and wink. Then I kind of stood behind him and reached my arm round under his, and shook for him for about a half an hour as tight as I could spring. Then we concluded it was best to adjourn for to-day. And I've made out to get away up into the garret in the tavern long enough to write this letter. We shall be off to-morrow or next day for York, and if I can possibly get breathing time enough there, I shall write to you again."

On the 13th of June, 1833, the party arrived in New York, and "got a ducking," by the breaking down of the bridge at Castle Garden. The Major here wrote again to his Uncle Joshua, giving a full account of the sad

catastrophe, in which nobody was killed and nobody hurt, except about fifty things they called "dandies," which looked so after they got wet he couldn't tell whether they were dead or alive ; so they "pulled em out and laid em up on the grass to dry and left em."

And here we come to an important point, an era in the Downing literature which requires special notice. It was now nearly three years and a half that Major Downing had been serving and enlightening his countrymen. In all that time his fame had steadily increased. His letters were copied into every paper all over the land, and his name was in every body's mouth. Next to General Jackson he was decidedly the most popular man in the United States. Perhaps nothing is more calculated to excite a feeling of envy, than great popularity. The popular man is like the child who holds a nice stick of candy in his hand ; all the children around are on tiptoe to get a nibble. It is not strange therefore, that many in different parts of the country endeavored to get a taste of Major Downing's popularity by attempting to imitate his writings.

But one individual at this time made a bold and systematic rush at the Major, and attempted to strip his well-earned laurels from his brow and entwine them round his own head. This was a respectable merchant, a heavy iron dealer, in Broad street, New York. Violently seized with the mania a potu of literature, he sat down and wrote a Downing letter, giving an account of the arrival of the Presidential party in New York, signed it with the Major's name, and published it in the old Daily Advertiser.

As the letter of the genuine Major giving an account of the same affair, was sent to his Uncle Joshua through

the Portland Courier, it took several days for it to make the journey down east and back again. In the mean time the letter of the iron dealer made its appearance with Major Downing's signature, and was seized upon by the greedy multitude and passed about as the true coin. The thousands and tens of thousands who had been hurraing for Major Downing for weeks and months, and some of them for years, of course raised their voices again as loud as ever.

"God bless me!" said the Broad street merchant; "why, I've electrified the world! I had no idea I was such a great writer before. I must go into this business deep; who cares for trade when he can get popularity and literary fame?"

Henceforth the Broad street merchant became a man of *letters*, and the iron business was turned over to the other members of the firm. For months afterwards he earnestly applied himself to writing Downing letters, and as he could always get them to the New York market before the letters of the true Major, who was riding about with the "Gineral," and sending his epistles through the Portland Courier, could arrive here, the merchant thought the run of the trade was all in his favor. And whenever the clouds in all parts of the country pealed forth the name of Major Downing, "God bless me!" said the merchant, "don't you hear my thunder!"

But we are dilating too much for the object we proposed to ourselves on this occasion, and must draw to a close. Americus Vespucius filched the name of America, *but Columbus discovered the country*. It is the province of history to set these matters right. In November, 1833, an enterprising and extensive publishing house in Boston, Messrs Lilly, Waite, Colman, and

Holden, published a volume of the Major's letters with a brief sketch of his life, which had a very rapid and wide sale. This afforded another opportunity for the Broad street merchant to gather fresh laurels, and he accordingly had his letters collected and published in a volume in New York.

These circumstances at the time were much commented upon by the papers of the day. We shall here quote a couple of paragraphs from the many that appeared, as applicable to our purpose. The following was the language of Major Noah's Evening Star.

*Major Jack Downing turned author.*—The letters which have just been published in a neat duodecimo volume by Lilly, Waite, & Co., Boston, and which have obtained a circulation and celebrity more extended perhaps than any production that ever issued from the American Press, are written with all the quaint simplicity of the style of Fielding, and abound in passages of infinite drollery and exquisite humor. It would appear that the Major since quitting the peaceful abode of the little village of Downingville and the company of Aunt Nabby and Uncle Joshua, has become quite dazzled with the splendor of our imperial court of Washington, and the intimacy with the "Gin'ral" and other grandees of the "*Kitchen Cabinet*." He now disdains any longer to grope in the obscure columns of a newspaper and comes forth accoutered in all the aristocratic armory of authorship, and we have no doubt from the imposing and formidable attitude in which he now appears, and the universal popularity of his writings, that he will achieve new triumphs in the reputation he has already acquired.

About the same time, the National Gazette at Philadelphia, then conducted by the distinguished Robert Walsh, bore the following high testimony.

[From Walsh's National Gazette.]

It has been the fate of all successful authors to have counterfeits, who deal with their originals as Hamlet says that some players imitate nature. The Rabelais, the Swifts, the Voltaire, suffered in their day by the productions of interlopers of the sort. Mere bunglers attempted to personate them, and confounded the less discriminating or critical part of the

reading public. Major Jack Downing has paid in like manner the penalty of genius and popularity; and he has complained of the hardship and injustice in a characteristic vein. We humbly advise him to write over the whole story of President Jackson's late expedition. It might confidently be predicted that a full narrative from his pen, duly authenticated, would obtain as much vogue in these United States, as did Peter Plymley's Letters in Great Britain."

So great was the popularity of Major Downing during the "Gineral's" administration, that the artists all over the country were in a "terrible taking" to get a glimpse of him, so that they might make out some kind of a likeness. One of the most successful efforts of the artists for this purpose was described in the following communication published in the New York Journal of Commerce.

[For the Journal of Commerce.]

While in Boston, I visited the Athenæum Gallery of paintings, and there I saw the portrait of the immortal *Jack Downing*, that wonderful traveller and commentator on the sayings and doings of our great men, the President's right-hand man, and the individual on whom it is said the learned fraternity at Cambridge conferred the title of A. S. S. which Jack says, being interpreted, means "*Amazin Smart Skoller.*" Perhaps your readers might be interested in a brief description of the *person* of this singular genius, as represented by the portrait. It is said to be a phrenological head, of which the critics in Boston and elsewhere speak very highly. It is the production of *Mr. Harris*, a young artist in Portland, Me. Jack is about forty years old, thick set and stoutly built,—his features bold and strong,—complexion florid and healthy,—nose a little aquiline,—yellow hair, with a *cow-lick* on the top of the head. But his expression is inimitable. The whole face, in the words of the Boston Globe, "beams with a characteristic expression and sly humor of a shrewd, thriving, and full blooded yankee. It is a sort of humanized Silenus, with a breadth and vividness of sensual roguery in the expression of the mouth, which Rubens would have turned to good account in one of his Bachanalian groups."

Jack Downing's letters first appeared in the Portland Daily Courier, about three years since, when he introduced himself as an honest farmer from Downingville, on a visit to Portland

for the purpose of selling a load of *bean-poles* ; but happening in at the Legislature then in session, he became interested—forgot his bean poles, commenced commenting on their proceedings, (corresponding with “Uncle Joshua,” “Cousin Ephraim,” “Aunt Nabb,” and others,) and since that time has continued his letters, which have been as extensively copied, perhaps, as any correspondence ever known.—The London papers are now republishing them.

The portrait in the gallery represents him in the attitude of inditing one of his epistles,—with a copy of the *Daily Courier* lying beside him, and a full length engraving of “*the President*” before him. Since the appearance of the portrait in the gallery, there have been a number of other portraits and engravings got up purporting to be Major Downing, but these, I believe, are all a hoax.

One of the most prominent shoots from the root of the Downing literature of the country, aside from the main tree, sprung up under the name of “Sam Slick.” A year or two after Major Downing’s letters began to appear in the *Portland Courier*, the public attention was attracted by a clever little volume entitled “*Sam Slick, the clockmaker*,” which afterwards proved to be from the pen of Judge Halliburton, of *Novia Scotia*. There was no plagiarism about this little volume ; it had a distinct character and a distinct name ; but its general features, air and manner, showed it to be a legitimate offspring of Downingism. Had Major Downing never written, the public never would have heard of Sam Slick. This reference is not intended as the least disparagement of Judge Halliburton, who acquired no small fame by his *Clockmaker*, and a wider reputation by the subsequent observations of Sam Slick in *England*.

Our only object is to do a simple act of justice to our author, Major Downing, and to disabuse the public mind of certain errors and prejudices, by tracing out the origin and progress of Downing literature. We

might say much more, and we do not see how our duties could have permitted us to say less. Were we to follow the Major through his subsequent career to the close of the "Gineral's" administration, and his connection with the press, the Downing Gazette in Portland, the Bunker Hill in New York, and other periodicals, we should fill a volume.

But our task is done. We drop the pen with entire confidence that truth is great and will prevail. In ages to come, and in all time, amid all the literary revolutions of the world, when critics shall be confounded and the nations delighted by the bursting forth of fresh streams of Downing literature, even then shall remote posterity look far back upon the page of history, beaming with the steady light of truth, and with grateful hearts and laughing eyes exclaim, "the great author and founder of the Downing school of literature was Major Jack Downing, of Downingville, away down east in the State of Maine."

THE PUBLISHERS.



# JACK DOWNING'S LETTERS.

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## LETTER I.

TO AUNT KEZIAH DOWNING, wife of Uncle Joshua, Postmaster of Downingville, away down East in the State of Maine.

*New York, May 3, 1845.*

DEAR AUNT:—I s'pose you begin to think by this time it's a good while since I writ to you; but the truth is, any body might as well try to write a letter in a hornet's nest as to try to write one in New York any time for a month before the first of May, especially if they live in a hired house and expect to have to move when May-day comes round; and that I take it is the case with jest about one half the New Yorkers about every year. It's an awful custom, and where it come from I can't find out; but it has used me up worse than building forty rods of stone wall, or chopping down ten acres of trees. I haint had my clothes off for a week, and I haint had a quiet night's rest for a month; and the way my bones have ached would be enough to make a horse cry his eyes out.

I couldn't write anything to-day but about house-hunting and moving if I should try. Jest to give you a little insight into the common run of this ere business, I'll lay down some of the outlines of it before I undertake to tell you how we got through the scrape ourselves. There's two sorts of folks in

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this city; and it's such an everlastin' great concern you may well suppose there's about as many as you could shake a stick at of both sorts. One sort is them that *lets* houses, and t'other sort is them that *hires*. They call 'em here, landlords and tenants. And the way they use each other up isn't slow, I can tell you. They have a regular war every year. The maneuvering and twisting, and crowding, and quarrelling, begins to come on in February, and it grows hotter and hotter till the first day of May, when they have the great regular pitched battle. And then sich a rumpus, and sich a route I don't think the world ever see any where else. The children of Israel, that we read about in the Bible, going out of Egypt with their flocks and their little ones, wasn't no touch to it. The landlords generally lead, because they have the most money to carry on the war; but that don't discourage the tenants so but that they renew the fight again the next year as hard as ever. The tussle is all about the price of rents; the landlords want to get 'em up higher, and the tenants want to get 'em down lower; and when so many thousand of 'em on both sides fairly come to the scratch, they make hot work of it.

The landlords have a way here sich as I don't think they have any where else in the world, of letting their houses for just exactly one year from the first day of May, twelve o'clock at noon. And they make the tenants hire the houses in February for the next year. And if they don't hire 'em then, and agree to pay what the landlord asks, he puts a handbill on to the house, saying "this house to let," and the first day of May, at twelve o'clock, if the tenant isn't out, an officer goes and puts him into the street neck and heels, with his wife and children, and all his housen-stuff, whether they have any place to put their heads in or not—that is, if the

tenant has paid up his rent; if he hasn't, the landlord nabs the housen-stuff and sells it at vandue.

They build all sich great costly houses here, that nobody but smart folks that's got plenty of money can live in a whole house to themselves; so common sort of folks have to take parts of houses. We've been living most of the time since we've been here, in the third story of one of 'Squire Sharp's houses. 'Squire Sharp is a little black-eyed, slender, peaked-nosed man, that looks as though he might crawl through a square of seven by nine glass, if the glass was fairly out, and not squeeze him neither. Now most of the great rich folks, that own so many houses here, are large, fat, red-faced men, that ride about in their carriages most of the time, and when they walk look as though they'd step right over common folks' heads. They get most of their rents, because their tenants are so awful 'fraid of 'em, that they about as lieves die as not to pay 'em. But it aint so with 'Squire Sharp. Somehow, nobody don't seem to be afraid of him, and yet he don't loose hardly any of his rents. He's the keenest hand to make a bargain that ever I see, and he gets his rents by looking after 'em; he fairly dogs it out of his tenants; and if any of 'em happen to give him the slip, he's as keen as a bloodhound to scent 'em out, and he'll follow 'em day and night till he gets it. He's as thin as a bed-post, and always looks as holler as if he hadn't eat any thing for a week. But he's a rich man for all that. He owns the whole block where we've been living, seven or eight great three story brick houses, besides ever so many more round the city.

We had two rooms and two bedrooms, as I said afore, in the third story. Cousin Nabby and the two youngest children slept in one bedroom, and Jacky and Ichabod in t'other bedroom, and wife

and I in one of the large rooms. T'other room we had to cook and eat in. I paid eighty dollars a year rent. When I went to hire it, I wasn't dressed very slick, and 'Squire Sharp looked at me as much as five minutes, and eyed me from top to toe before he give me any answer. At last, says he,

"Who's your security?"

Says I, "I never asked any body to be bondsman for me yet in my life, and I shan't begin to-day, I guess."

So I turned round and was going to clear out. But says he,

"Stop, Mister! I don't know as it will make much odds; for I always let them third stories payable weekly in advance; and you can have it in that way for eighty dollars a year."

As I couldn't do any better jest then, I concluded to take it; so we moved in. Every Monday morning for three weeks the 'Squire come round as regular as clock-work, and took his week's advance. But about the middle of the fourth week, which was the second or third day of February, he come in and says he,

"Major Downing, I've come to sec if you are going to engage this tenement for the next year?"

"Well, 'Squire," says I, "I guess I can tell you that better when this year is out. And besides, 'Squire, you know I don't hire your house by the year; I hire it by the week."

"It isn't so," says he; "you hire it by the year, and *pay* by the week."

"But how can I hire by the year," says I, "when you told me, at the time I hired it, that you couldn't engage it only till the first of May?"

"Why," says he, "all our rent years begin the first of May, and I let it to you for the balance of the year. Now, if you are a mind to engage it for a year from the first of May, payable weekly in

advance, you can have it; and I'll draw up the writings and have 'em fixed to-day."

"But, 'Squire," says I, "now, how onreasonable that is! Only jest think of it: Here it is three months before the first of May, and who knows but what we may all be dead before that time? And besides I may have some business to do somewhere else by that time, and shan't want to live here any longer. No, no, 'Squire; let these three months run out, and then, if I want to stay here, and we can agree, I'll hire it again."

At that the 'Squire colored up a little, and says he, "Major Downing, I can't do any sich thing. If you want the house next year, you must engage it now, and sign the papers; if not, I shall put a bill on the house, '*to let.*' I can't break over any of our rules."

"Well," says I, "'Squire, I never was drove yet by any man in my life, and I guess I shan't be to-day. You may do as you like; but as for hiring a house before I know whether I shall want it or not, I shan't do no sich thing."

At that the 'Squire cleared out and went off. The next morning I heard a little hammering on the side of the house, and I looked out, and there was the 'Squire, nailing up a bill, with large letters on it, "THIS HOUSE TO LET." And I looked along, and I see there was jest sich a bill on every house in the block. Thinks I, what's to pay now? I guess some terrible overturn has happened to the 'Squire or his tenants, to break 'em all up in a heap so. I felt kind of uneasy about it; so, after breakfast, I took my hat, and went out, and walked a mile or two about the city. And I soon found that whatever the trouble might be between the 'Squire and his tenants, the same trouble had spread all over the city; for in every street I went through, it seemed to me one half the houses had bills on 'em, to let.

Well, thinks I, I'm glad I didn't engage that house of 'Squire Sharp, for there's sich an everlastin' sight of houses to let now, it's a wonder to me if I don't find one pretty cheap. So I went home, and told Polly all New York was to let, and I guessed we should find a house next year cheap enough.

I hadn't hardly got sot down after I come in, before I heard a knock at the door ; and says I " come in." And in come a great, stout, fat, squaddy woman, and says she, " I see this tenement in the third story, is to let, and I jest want the privilege of looking at it a little to see if I can make it do for my family."

" Certainly, marm," says I, for I always pride myself in bein perlite to the ladies. " Polly, jest show the lady the rooms." So Polly went round to show her the house.

" Which is the parlor?" said the fat lady.

" This is the fore-room," said Polly ; " but we use it to sleep in as we are rather scant of room."

" Oh, marcy," said the fat lady ; " how can anybody think of living without a parlor? It must be dreadful vulgar. Well, which is the kitchen?"

So Polly showed her the kitchen, though she was jest cooking dinner, and the dinner things was all round jest as it happened. I see Polly felt a little uneasy about it, and colored up when she asked to go into the kitchen, for you know, Aunt, that Polly, though I say it myself, was always as neat as wax-work, and never could bear to have anybody look into the kitchen unless everything was put up as neat as a pin. Howsomever, she opened the door, and the fat lady marched in.

" Oh, marcy on us," said she, " this'll never do for my family at all. There's no convenience about it; only one little stived up closet. Oh, it'll never do for me at all; how can you get along with it?"

Polly told her it wasn't so handy as some kitchens,

"Well" said she, "let me see the sleeping rooms."

So Polly opened the bed-room doors; and the fat lady lifted up her hands and declared she would as soon sleep in a pig's pen and done with it, as to go into sich little mean stived up places as them. Then she went back again into the kitchen, and looked into the closet, and examined the dishes of bread and butter, and cold meat that was left the day before, and said it was a shame for landlords to build sich ill-contrived houses. Then she took a chair and sot down, for she had talked so much she began to grow a little wheezy. At last she declared she wouldn't live in the house if they would give it to her. I begun to get a little riled, and told her I guessed she better not think of hiring it then, for I was pretty sure she would find it an awful tiresome business to go up and down three pair of stairs. At that she got up and went out, and slammed the door tu pretty hard after her, and never said boo to one of us.

Well, this was only just the beginning of trouble, for arter that there was a steady stream of folks coming in to look at the house for about two months, commonly as much as five or six a day and sometimes more; and you may guess a little from the account of the fat lady what sort of a time we had of it. At last, about the first of April, I looked out one day and I see Squire 'Sharp come and take down the bill of third story to let. And though I knew then I should have to move, whether or no, I felt glad the bill was down, because it would stop that everlasting stream of folks coming in and botherin of us so every day. Polly began to grow uneasy now, because we hadn't got no house, and said I ought to go a house hunting jest as every body else did, or else we should be turned out of doors bime by. So I told her I'd go at it next day, and make a business of it, and follow it up till I got a

house. Accordingly the next day I went at it, and I found it a pesky sight worse job than I expected. The bills wasn't near so thick as they was two or three weeks before ; but still I thought they was so plenty, there would be no trouble in finding a house. I went round the upper part of the city, because folks said rents was a good deal cheaper up there than down in town. At last I found part of a house that I thought looked as if it would do nicely ; and looked at the bill and it said inquire sich a number in Wall street. Well, I started off to Wall street, and after walking about two miles and a half I got there and found the place, and come to inquire the rent, it was two hundred and fifty dollars. I couldn't afford to give more than eighty or a hundred dollars rent, so back I went to take another hunt. At last I found one that looked as though it might be a good deal cheaper, and I looked at the bill, and that said inquire at another number in Wall street. So I posted down again and found the place and inquired the rent. It was a hundred and fifty dollars. I was studying the matter over to see if it would do for me to think of giving so much, when the man asked me how much family I had. I told him there was myself and wife and cousin Nabby and six children. At that, says he, " We never let it to children ;" and he shot the door and went in. So there I found I was up a tree again. I had got so tired by this time, and it had got to be towards night, that I thought I would give it up for a bad days work, and go home. When I got home I found Polly almost tired to death, for she had felt so uneasy for fear we should be turned out of doors bime by, that she had been out most, all day house-hunting too. But she hadn't made out any better than I did. I told Polly she better stay at home and take care of the children, and not worry herself about it, and I'd foller the business up till I got



a house at some rate or other. So the next morning I started again, and I trampoosed the city from one end to 'tother, lengthways, and crossways, and cornerways; but I didn't make out any better than I did the day before. In the morning I would find a bill on a house that looked as if it might do, and come to read it, it would say, to be seen only from two to five in the afternoon; and in the afternoon I would find a bill that would say, to be seen only from ten to twelve in the morning. And then again I would see a house that looked about right, and I would step up to the door and ask if I might look at it, and they would say, that they had so much trampling over the house they couldn't have any more of it, and shet the door and go in. Wherever I went I see the streets was full of folks house-hunting, and half the time when I went to look at a bill, there would be so many others bobbing up onto the steps before me that I would have to wait most half an hour before I could get a chance to read it. And when I did get up to it, as likely as not it would say, "This house to let to a small, genteel family, *without children*;" so there I would be dished again. Once I stood on the steps, reading a bill, and there was a great, fat, greasy-faced woman stood right afore me, facing it, reading it tu. She was a cross, sour-looking thing, and looked as if she had lived on hog's fat all her life—and I think it is pretty likely she had, for the city is full of hogs. You would see more hogs here, in walking the streets for half an hour, than you would see in Downinville for a whole year. Well, as I stood opposite that old grease spot, reading the bill, there come up sich a crowd behind me to read the bill tu, that they knocked my head right into her bonnet. By the gracious if my ears didn't ring again! She slapped her great square hand against the side of my head so hard, it almost knocked me off the steps.

"You saucy, good for nothing brute," says she, and her eyes were starting out of her head as big as an ox's eyes when he's drawing a heavy load—"haint you no more manners?" says she, "set out to kiss me so, right here in the street tu, and afore all these folks?"

I told her upon my word and honor it was no sich thing. 'Twas the folks behind me that pushed me, and I hadn't the least thought in the world of kissing her. At that I thought she looked crosser than she did afore, and I jumped off the steps and got away as fast as I could. I went home that night pretty well tired out, and most discouraged about finding a house. But I see Polly grew more uneasy; so I started again next morning, and kept it up right and tight every day for pretty near a fortnight, till I got the bottoms of my shoes all wore off. Then I stopped one day and got 'em tapped and rested upon 't, and then I went at it again. At last, in the course of my travels, I found three houses that I thought might do, if I couldn't do any better. But the rents was a little too high. They asked me \$90 to \$100 a-piece for 'em. I thought they hadn't ought to be more than \$80. And folks told me that them that didn't let their houses till about the first of May would have to put their rents down. So I concluded to watch these 'ere three houses, and hold on till the last day of April. One was way over towards the North River, pretty well up town, on a cross street leading out of Greenwich street. Two rooms and two bedrooms, on the second floor. The next was away over 'tother way, beyond the Bowery, towards the East River, and pretty well up towards the Dry Dock. One room in the basement, three in the third story, and one in the attic, if wanted. But the basement was awful wet. 'Tother one was away up the Third avenue, not far from the Alms House. It took me

about half the day, every day for a fortnight, to go round to these three houses and see that the bills were still on. For I thought as long as I could have my choice of the three I was safe. Well, when it come to be the last day of April, I thought it was time to bring matters to a close. So in the course of the forenoon I walked away up to the Third avenue; that house being a little the cheapest rent I thought on the whole, bein times was very dull, I better take that. They asked ninety-five dollars, but would take ninety for a good tenant. I walked along, thinking I'd try 'em pretty hard for eighty dollars; and if I couldn't get it for that, I'd offer 'em eighty-five; and if they wouldn't let it for that, I'd take it for ninety.

At last I came in sight of the house, and looked, but I couldn't see no bill on it. I went up and asked if the house was let, and they said yes, it was let about an hour ago. I turned about and quickened my steps, and walked away down towards the East River house, and thought I'd take it right off, if I had to give as much as ninety-five dollars for it. Or even I didn't know as I should stick at a hundred. When I got in sight of that house, the bill was off of that too. This made me feel a little streaked, and the sweat started out on my forehead pretty fast. I stepped up and asked them if the house was let. They said yes, it was let that morning, and they could a let two or three more jest like it if they'd had 'em. I begun to be afraid now I'd got into rather a bad box. I didn't dare to go home and tell Polly how things looked; and as it was now but little arter noon, I thought I'd run round two or three streets, and see if I couldn't hunt up some houses. So I pulled foot, and hunted and sweat, till I got so tired I couldn't but jest stand. There was a good many bills up, but somehow I couldn't find any that would seem to do.

They was all too high rent, or they wouldn't take children, or something or other was in the way. I felt pretty bad. So I thought I'd go home and tell Polly the worst on't, and go up and see if the Greenwich house was gone too. When I come to tell her about it, she showed a little dander.

"Now, Jack," says she, "if you *have* delayed so long that we've lost the chance of getting a house, and have to be turned out of doors to-morrow, I shall lay it all to you, every bit of it. I must say you might a known better."

Now Polly doesn't hardly ever give me a hard word, and come to have this from her, poured right on top of the trouble I was in about a house, made me feel bad, aunt Keziah, I can tell you. But I told Polly, frettin wouldn't help the matter a bit, and if she'd give me a mouthful of bread and butter, I'd go and try once more. At that she come tu a little, and sot on some bread and butter, and then we started off together. We went all round over the place they call Greenwich village, though if I was to die I couldn't tell it from the city; but we didn't find a single house or part of a house that would seem to do, till we got up to a cross street, where the house was that I'd picked out afore. As soon as we turned round the corner, and come in sight of that are house, I looked and the bill was on. If I'd a had a half a ton weight took off my shoulders I couldn't a felt lighter than I did that minit. It was about sunset, and the last day of April. The old folks that owned the house, and lived in the lower part of it, were standing out on the steps and looking very wistfully, first up the street and then down the street, and I knew by their looks they felt as if it was their last chance, for if they didn't let it that night, may be they wouldn't let it for the whole year. I give Polly's arm a jerk, and whispered to her, and says I. "Now do you keep still as a mouse

and not appear as though we wanted a house much, and I'll get that house for lower rent yet."

We walked along up in a careless kind of a way, as if we wasn't looking for any thing. Then we stopped a little and looked up to the house, and says I,

"Mister, you've got to let your house lay over this year, haven't you?"

"Well," says he, "I don't know; the man that talked of taking it hasn't come yet; but he may be here this evening."

"Well, Mister," says I, "what'll you take for them rooms in the second story?"

"Aint you suited yet?" says he, eyeing us very sharp, and stepping down off the steps.

"Not exactly," says I. "If I could get your house low enough, I don't know but I might take it."

"Well," says he, "I've calculated to get a hundred dollars for it; but bein it's getting late I'll let it go for ninety."

I told him I couldn't give that, but if he'd a mind to let it go for seventy I'd take it. He said he couldn't think of that; though he didn't know, for a good tenant and good security, he might say eighty, to a quiet family without children.

At that, Polly couldn't help putting in a word in spite of all I'd said to her; and says she,

"I should like to know how the New Yorkers expects folks to get along in this world without children."

"Ah, then you have children," said the old gentleman, changing his manner in a moment. "Well, there's a great difference in children. Some families keep 'em very quiet, while in others they are desput troublesome. I dare say you keep yourn in good order."

"Well," says I, "I must be agoin; I can't think

of paying eighty dollars." And I began to edge along a little.

"Mister," says he, "if you take the house, what kind of security will you give me?"

"Oh," says I, "I'll pay the rent every week in advance, if you want it. But I can't give eighty dollars."

"Well," says he, "you may have it for seventy-five, and that's the lowest."

"I'll take it," says I, "and here's a silver dollar to bind the bargain till I move in."

At that the old man took down the bill, and Polly and I turned to go home to get ready for the great battle the next day.

And now, Dear Aunt Keziah, I've got to break right off short, for the printer says I've spun my yarn out so long he can't wait for any more. But I'll try to give you an account of the *moving* in my next letter. Give my love to Uncle Joshua, and I remain your loving nephew,

MAJOR JACK DOWNING.

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## LETTER II.

TO AUNT KEZIAH DOWNING, wife of Uncle Joshua, of Downingville, Maine.

*New-York, May 5th, 1845.*

DEAR AUNT:—In my last letter, I told you something about *house-hunting* in New-York, and the terrible bother landlords and tenants get into every spring; but the story was so long I had to break off before I said half what I wanted to. And now

I am going to try to tell you something about *moving day*. Oh, of all the days in this 'ere world, and I've seen a good many kinds of days in my life-time—I've seen trainin' days, and muster days, and independent days, and when I lived in Washington along with General Jackson, bless the dear old man! we used to have Christmas and New-Year's days; but of all the days that ever I did see in this 'ere world, moving-day in New-York is the cap-sheaf. It is no more like the May-days we used to have in Downingville, than a toad under a harrow is like a man on horseback. You know what good, pleasant times we used to have when the first day of May come round in Downingville, how everything in the house was all slicked up a day or two beforehand as neat as a pin, and the things in every room all sot to rights, and the children's faces all washed, and their heads combed, and their clean clothes all ready for 'em to put on. And then, about sunrise May morning, what a scampering there was among the children! They'd come darting out of all the houses like flocks of new butterflies, all dressed up as neat as pinks, and their eyes glistening and shining like glass buttons. And away they'd fly in whole swarms across the fields, and up on the hills, and away in the woods; and when they come back to breakfast you couldn't tell which was the reddest, their cheeks or the bunches of flowers they had in their hands. And every part of Downingville all day would smell as sweet as a rose.

But 'taint so in New-York, aunt Keziah, not by a jug-full. Everything here on a May-day looks amazin' different, and smells amazin' different, I can tell you. But I'll try and see if I can give you some little notion of it. To begin where I left off in my last letter: When I got through making a bargain with old Mr. Johnson, that's the name of the man I hired the house of—when I got through, and the old

man took the bill down off the house, and I felt sure at last that we'd got a house to go into next day, and shouldn't have to be turned out of doors, Polly and I turned about to go home, a good deal lighter-hearted than we had been before for a fortnight. It was jest beginning to grow dark a little, and we had a considerable ways to go, round ever so many corners, and through a good many streets; but don't you think there were so many lights it was jest as easy going as it would be in the day time. In all the streets there was long rows of lamps lit on both sides of the streets as fur as you could see; and you might go round miles and miles, and turn which way you would, you couldn't see no end to lamps. I'll say that for New-York, it's a good deal easier getting about here in the night time than it is in Downingville.

Well, Polly and I jogged along towards home, but we hadn't gone a great ways before we begun to see other great lights in the streets than lamps; and they begun to grow thicker and thicker in all the streets—great blazing fires, as big as we used to have in the fields when we were burning off brush in the spring. What under the sun can all these fires mean? says I. I begun to be afraid the tenants had come off so bad in the battle with the landlords this time, that they might be layin' a plan to burn up the whole city at once. But Polly said she didn't believe but what they'd begun to turn them folks that hadn't got no houses into the streets already, and they was building up fires to stay by in the night. Poor critters! says she, how I do pity 'em! for I know that's what it is. I told her no, she might depend upon't, 'twasn't the rule to turn 'em out till next day at twelve o'clock precisely.

By this time we got along into a shabby looking street, chock full of hogs and boys, and you couldn't hardly tell which looked the cleanest, or behaved



the best, the hogs or the boys—nor hardly which was the thickest. Here we come along to one of these ere great fires, and stopt a few minutes to look at it. There was fifty boys round it, poking it with sticks, and hollering and screaming like bedlam. At last, says I to a little boy that stood near me—

“My lad, what’s the meaning of all these ere great fires about the streets to-night?”

“Nothing,” says he, “only jest burning up the old straw.”

“What old straw?” says I.

“Why, the old beds,” says he; “every body burns up the old straw to night.”

“But,” says I, “If every body burns up their beds to-night, what ’ll they do to sleep on to-morrow night?”

“Oh,” says he, “they can get enough more to the flour and feed stores to-morrow.”

At that all the other boys, that had been a looking and listening to hear what we said, sot up such a giggling and a hurrying, it fairly made some of the four-legged pigs snort and run. And then one little sassy rascal come up within about ten foot of me, and stood and put his thumb up agin the side of his nose, and looked up with an awful sassy look at me, and hollered out, “ain’t ye green?” And then he pulled foot and run for fear I should be arter him. But I didn’t mind nothin’ about him, though the boys all luffed again as if they’d split. Bimeby out came a couple of dirty looking gals from a dirty looking house, lugging along a straw bed, and emptied it on to the fire.

“Whorah,” said the boys, as they run with their sticks and poked the straw into the fire—“Whorah; now for roast bed-bugs and fleas. Hark, only hear the fleas roar; and them bed-bugs crack and snap like burning hemlock.”

"Hold your tongues, you sassy brutes," said the gals.

At that the boys took arter 'em full chisel with handfulls of burning straw, and the gals run as if a catamount had been arter 'em till they got into the house.

Polly give my arm a jerk, and begged of me to make haste out of the street. We jogged along again towards home, and we didn't get into any other street quite so bad as that, though we went through a number that didn't smell any too sweet, I can tell you. At last we got home and found cousin Nabby most out of patience waiting for us ; she'd had supper ready an hour, and the youngest children was very tired and fretty. So we sot down to supper, and before we 'd got half through, somebody knocked at the door.

"Come in," says I. And the door opened, and in came an Irishman with a basket full of dishes, as much as he could lug. And says he, "Plase yer honor."

You know, aunt Keziah, how queer these ere Irishmen talk ; it's enough to make a body laff till his sides aches to hear em talk so broad and ungrammatical.

"Plase yer honor," says he, "mistress Pinkham wants to know if ye'll be so kind as to be after obleeging her so much as to do her a little kindness jest to let her reposit a few things in one of your rooms to-night. It 'ill be very convaniant for her indade."

"Who is Miss Pinkham?" says I.

"It's the lady that's rinted this tinement, yer honor," says he, "and it 'll be very convaniant for her, if you'll allow her."

"Oh, yes," says I, "I'm always glad to do a lady a favor if I can ; you may set 'em into the fore room there an' welcome."

Before he'd got 'em half took out of the basket, n come another chap, luggin four chairs. And then followed a boy with a dish kettle in one hand, filled up with a mess of little things, and the shovel and tongs in 'tother. Then in comes a little gal with a looking glass, and brought it along to Polly, and says she,

"Ma wants you to set this away very careful, for she wouldn't have it broke for anything in the world, 'twould be sich a bad sign."

So Polly got up and took the glass and hung it on a nail by the side of ourn. By the time we'd done supper, all hands had been back, and came lugging in another load, and piled it up in the fore-room. And the little girl said, "Ma would come round bime by and see about stoin it away." And back they all went for another load. I see that Polly and cousin Nabby begun to feel a little nettled; but I told them 'twasn't best to mind it: we should be off to-morrow, and we could put up with a little trouble for one night, jest for the sake of doin a kindness.

Presently in they come again with as much as they could lug, of all sorts of housen-stuff that you could think on. And at last Miss Pinkham herself come puffin and blowin up three pair of stairs, and come boltin into the kitchen where we was all setting; and who should it be but that same great fat lady that I told about in my last letter, come to examine the rooms the first day the bill was up in February. I didn't feel over and above good natured when I come to see who she was. Polly looked as though she felt a little wiry, and cousin Nabby looked as red as a flash. I'm commonly pretty plain-spoken, you know, ant; so says I,

"Miss Pinkham, have you hired these ere rooms?"

"Yes," says she, "I've rented 'em for a year."

"Well," says I, "what did 'Squire Sharp give you to take 'em?"

"Do you mean," says she, "what rent I pay for em?"

"No," says I, "what does 'Squire Sharp give you to take 'em?"

"Well," says she, "I don't understand sich a question as that; so you may as well leave off your jokes."

"But when you was here lookin at these ere rooms, last February," says I, "you said you wouldn't live in 'em if any body'd give 'em to you."

"Well," says she, "I thought I shouldn't like 'em very well at first; but on the whole I think it's quite a nice place—the rooms are so snug and genteel."

"Why, yes," says I, "I think it quite a good place for eighty dollars."

"Eighty dollars!" says she, "I hope you don't think I give eighty dollars for it. I know how to work Squire Sharp better than that. I run it down to him to the lowest notch; told him there wasn't a single convenience about it; only one little stived up closet, and 'twas all up and down stairs, and I didn't believe he could hardly hire a decent family to live there. I offered him fifty dollars, and stuck to it about two months, and he stuck to eighty, and said he wouldn't take a penny less. But at last this morning, I asked him if he was going to let me have the rooms for fifty dollars; if not I was going right off to take another house that I had had the offer of a great deal cheaper. At that he looked as if he'd bite a board nail off, and says he, if you're a mind to give me sixty dollars you may have it, and that's the lowest. Nobody shall have it for less than that if I have to shut it up for a whole year. Well I told him I'd take it; so I got it for sixty dollars, and glad enough was I, for I'd made up my

mind to give eighty if I couldn't get it for no less. And now if you'll jest let me stow away a few things here to-night, it'll be a great convenience to me. It's sich an awful job to move May-day, I want to get clear of as much of it as I can."

You know, I'm one of those sort of folks, if any body asks a favor of me, I can't never refuse, so I told her yes, she might stow in what she'd a mind to. But I didn't s'pose she was going to bring in much more, for they'd got our fore room piled up so full then that we couldn't hardly get across it to go to bed. You know Polly and I had our bed in the fore-room, because we hadn't ony two sleepin rooms, and cousin Nabby and the two youngest children slept in one, and Jacky and Ichabod in 'tother. So I thought of course she wouldn't bring in nothin more that night, ony put to rights a little what was already there, bein it was getting pretty late in the evening. But I was mistaken, for we hadn't hardly done talking, when her regiment of Irishmen and boys and gals come clattering up the stairs again with loads of barrells and bedsteads, and pots and kettles, and washstands, and chairs, and baskets of tin dishes, and I don't know what all. Poor Polly began to look a little streaked, and I thought myself it was crowdin a little too hard. So I told Miss Pinkham I thought she better let the rest be till mornin, for if they brought in much more we should all get mixed up so bime by, 'twould be difficult to pick our things out when we came to move. But she said, O no, she'd help to do all that; and 'twould be so very convenient for her to bring in a few more things to-night; and 'twouldn't be any trouble to us at all. And then she turns round to her company, and says she, 'Come, boys and gals, make haste back and bring in some more as fast as you can.'

Then she went along to our bed and felt of it,

and says she, "Oh, marcy, you havn't carried out your straw yet; I hope you aint a goin to leave that till to-morrow; 'twill clutter the house all up when we shall want to be a setting up our things. Do pray carry it out to-night; there's fires enough in the street now."

At that Polly said she guessed I better carry it out, as she sposed 't was the custom for every body to do it. So at it I went and carried down the straw beds, and lugged them off a few rods to one of the fires, and emptied 'em out. As I turned round the corner by tother end of our block, there was a couple of men walked before me, talking together, and I knew in a minute one of em was 'Squire Sharp's voice. T'other one was a short fat gentleman, that seemed to be in a good deal of a pet because he couldn't let his houses.

"What, havn't you let yourn yet," says the Squire.

"No," says the fat gentleman, "I've got six good houses now that aint let, besides several parts.—Hang the housen, and tenants too. I wish I didn't own one. If all my property was in bank stock, or something else, that would bring me four per cent. I should be glad."

"Well," says 'Squire Sharp, "I always make it a pint to let all my tenements before the first of May, whether or no. If I can't get one price I take another; and I makes all my houses net me eight per cent, good."

Thinks I, Mr. fat gentleman, if you was as lean as 'Squire Sharp is, and looked after your houses as close, you'd get eight per cent, too.

"I always think it's the best way," says 'Squire Sharp, "to let 'em at all events before the first of May, and get what you can. And then be sure and look arter the rents and not loose 'em. I didn't let my last tenement till this morning. I always asked

eighty dollars for it; but I let it go for sixty. And if the woman had sot out to a gone away without taking of it, I should a let her had it for fifty. But the main thing is to collect your rent, after all, I don't think I've lost fifty dollars of my rent these five years."

"Zounds," said the fat gentleman, "I've lost more than three thousand during that time. But I'm determined to look after em more close in future. Now I think on't there's Miss Pinkham owes me more than two quarters rent now; and I'll nab her furniture the first thing to-morrow morning arter breakfast; for I've been told she's a little slippery about rents."

"She's the very woman," says the Squire, "that took my tenement this morning. But I'm safe, for I make her pay weekly in advance. That's the way I serve all my tenants that I aint sure about."

"Well," said the fat gentleman, "I guess you'll have to let your rooms to somebody else arter all; for I'm determined to stop Miss Pinkham's furniture to-morrow morning, the first thing arter breakfast."

At that I couldn't help laffin in my sleeve a little, for I thought I could begin to see how the cat was jumpin'. And thinks I, Mr. fat gentleman, I guess you aint in the habit of getting up any too early in the morning; and I shouldn't be afraid to wage a large potato you wont be up in time to nab that are housen-stuff of Miss Pinkham's arter all. By this time I'd got out of their hearing, and they went along, and I went home. When I went up stairs, I found they'd got the floor of the fore room all covered with housen-stuff, from one to two feet deep, and had begun to pile it up round the kitchen: and Miss Pinkham was hurrying her boys and gals and her stout Irishman to make haste and bring in as fast as they could. And they kept it agoin right and tight till about midnight, and then I could see

by the tag ends of all sorts of matters and things that begun to come along, that they was about winding up the business.

Polly is naterally very kind, you know, and hates to hurt any body's feelings, or disappoint 'em if she can help it; so she tried to put up with it the best way she could. But she begun to grow most heart-sick about it; for you know how neat Polly always keeps everything about her house, and a good deal of Miss Pinkham's truck that they'd piled about our fore-room and kitchen was dirty enough to turn a dog's stomach. And there we'd got to sleep right among it till next morning. But still Polly didn't make no complaints, though I see she felt bad enough. Cousin Nabby had got tired and gone to bed with the two youngest children about ten o'clock. Jacky and Ichabod had kept their eyes wide open till eleven, and then they begun to nod about and fall over the housen-stuff, so we sent them off to bed in 'tother bed-room. And now the clock had struck midnight, and Polly and I grew very tired and sleepy, and hoped Miss Pinkham and her boys and gals would clear out and let us have a little chance to rest afore morning. But when they got through bringing up their truck, the Irishman stepped up to her and asked for his pay. She told him to call the next day. But he said no, he was to have his pay as soon as his work was done. She told him he seemed to be dreadful fraid of losing two shillings; but she shouldn't pay him till next day at any rate. He said it wasn't two shillings; he was to have half a dollar, and he was to have his pay that night, and he would have it, and he wouldn't go away without it, at all, at all.

At that she ketched up a chair and told him "if he didn't get down stairs in a minit she'd beat his brains out, a good-for-nothin' imperdent brute."

And down the feller run as if he'd break his neck,



and whether he's got his half dollar yet I don't know. Polly looked as if she'd faint away, but I told her I'd seen worse squalls than that, when I used to live to Washington, with General Jackson.

"Now we've got all our things here," says Miss Pinkham, "I guess we'll spread down the carpet, and some rugs and bedclothes, and sleep here in the kitchen to-night, for I wouldn't disturb you in 'tother room where you sleep, on no account. I'm one of them sort of folks that always hates to trouble a body." At that she began to haul the dusty things about, to make up a bed on the kitchen floor. I told her, any way she'd a mind to fix it, if she'd only get quiet pretty soon, so we might get a little rest afore daylight.

"But where be I goin to sleep, mother?" says her great lubberly boy, that had been fetchin' up housen-stuff all the evening. "I aint agoin' to sleep here on the floor long with you and the gals I guess."

"Well, Jimmy," says Miss Pinkham, "I guess Miss Downing will let you sleep in the bed-room long with her two little boys. But you must mind and not wake 'em up so as to be a trouble; I hate to be a trouble to any body."

Polly looked as if she'd die; but she began to be so afraid of Miss Pinkham after she took up the chair to the Irishman, that if she'd ask'd for our bed, I don't think but what she would agin it right up to her, and slept on the floor ourselves. I thought I wouldn't interfere about it, for I knew there would be a fuss if I did, and I thought it was high time we all of us had a little rest.

So Jimmy went off to bed, in the bed-room, and Miss Pinkham and her two gals camped down on the kitchen floor, and Polly and I clambered along as well as we could over the heaps of housen-stuff to our bed in the fore-room. Arter we'd laid about an hour, and I begun to feel kind of drowsy, and

thought I should get a nap, I heard a rumpus in the kitchen. And bimeby I heard Miss Pinkham thumping away at the bed-room door, and calling Jimmy. He didn't answer till she went clear in and give him a shake, and says she,

"Jimmy, you didn't bring that grid-iron and poker, that stood in the cellar-way, now."

"Yes, I did," says he, "I brought it myself."

"No you didn't," says she, "for I haint seen nothin of it."

"I did bring it," says he, "and put it into a barrel behind the door in the fore-room."

"You sure?" says she.

"Yes I am sure; I remember."

"I don't believe a word on't," says she, "but I'll know."

So, in she come, bolting into our room, and fumbled and clambered along in the dark, till she got to the barrel behind the door, and felt in it, and says she,

"Well, I declare, 'tis here arter all. Jimmy has an excellent memory."

In climbing back again, over the housen-stuff, somehow or other she stumbled, headlong among the bedsteads and barrels, and screamed out,

"Oh dear, I've half broke my head; Miss Downing, have you got any camfire?"

There, ant Keziah, I've got to break right off short again before I get through the story about the movin, for the printer says he can't stand no longer yarn to-day. But I'll sartinly give you the upshot on't about movin day in my next.

So I remain your loving nephew,

MAJOR JACK DOWNING.

## L E T T E R I I I .

TO AUNT KEZIAH DOWNING, wife of Uncle Joshua, of Downingville, Maine.

THE UPSHOT OF THE STORY ABOUT MOVING.

*New York, May 8, 1845.*

DEAR AUNT KEZIAH,—As I was a saying in my last letter, Miss Pinkham tumbled headforemost among the barrels and bedsteads, and heaps o' things in our fore-room, and screamed out, "Oh dear, Miss Downing, have you got any camfire? oh, I'm half killed."

At that, Polly sprung out of bed like a shot. There's no body has more feelin' for a fellow-creeter than Polly has, tho' I say it myself; and the way she runs when she sees anybody in distress is a caution, I can tell ye, to all the chairs and barrels and bed-posts that stand in the way. Polly was kind of half awake and half asleep: I don't think she'd fairly got her eyes open, and if she had it wouldn't a made much odds, for it was dark as Egypt. And being waked all of a sudden right out of a sound sleep, for she'd got to sleep, though I hadn't, she'd forgot all about the trumpery that was piled about the room, and startin' off the bed like a stream of lightning, the first thing that brought her up was a basket of Miss Pinkham's crockery stuff. She pitched right over it and went sprawling on to the floor; and the tea-cups and the mugs and the pitchers flew as if they'd been struck with a thunder squall. At that, Miss Pinkham bawled out again, and by the sound I knew she was up 'n eend and climbled over the barrels; and says she,

"Now, Miss Downing, what *have* you done? If you've broke my new blue set, you'll wish you hadn't I can tell ye."

Polly didn't make no answer, but only groaned; and I knew in a minute she was hurt pretty bad; so I thought it was time for me to begin to muster. I got out of bed as careful as I could, and went feelin' my way along into the kitchen, and at last I found a loco-foco match and lit a candle.

"Don't bring that light here," says Miss Pinkham. says she, "'till you hand me my gownd."

Says I, "I don't know nothin' about your gownd, nor I can't stop to look for't now." So I threw a blanket to her, and told her she might rap herself up in that. I found Polly wasn't hurt quite so bad as I was afraid she was. She had bruised one of her arms considerable, and struck the side of her head pretty hard when she fell. But she soon begun to get over it, and said she guessed she wasn't hurt much.

Miss Pinkham took on as bad as ever, and said she should die if she didn't have some camfire to put on her head; and she clim along over the things and threw herself right on to our bed.

"Poor creetur," says Polly, "we must do something for her as quick as we can. Do, Jack, hand me that bottle of camfire on the upper shelf in the closet."

So I went and got the camfire and Polly sot to and rubbed the old lady's head about a quarter of an hour, and she got to sleep and lay and snored like a hoss. I told Polly I guessed she better lay down aside of her and try to get some sleep tu, and I'd set up the rest of the night and be ready airy in the morning to go to packing up. But Polly said she was afraid of disturbin' of her, so she laid down on the rugs in the kitchen to rest her and get a little nap. I knew there wasn't no more sleep for me that night; so arter Polly got to sleep I concluded to go out and take a run; for I always found that was the best way to keep my eyes open

when there wasn't no chance to sleep. The long rows of lamps was still burning by the sides of the streets, and I walked round and round from one street to another, till it got to be daylight, and then I turned to go home, for I meant to be driven business pretty airy.

When I got along within two or three streets of home, there was a couple men turned the corner right afore me, and I walked along arter 'em. Pretty soon I saw one of 'em was that short, stout, fat landlord that I see the night afore talking with 'Squire Sharp. And says he to the man that was with him,

"You've got your warrant, haint ye?"

"Yes," says the other, who I begun to think by this time, was a constable or some kind of an officer, for he carried a great, heavy cane in his hand, and looked kind of savage-like.

"Well," says the stout landlord, "you must take every single thing there is in the house, and hold on to it, and if they don't settle the rent, we'll sell 'em at vendue to-morrow. Here's the house; now do your duty. I'll stand here on the steps till you get fairly in and take possession."

At that, thinks I, I'll stop a little and see what's going on here. I stood over on t'other side of the street, but it was so still I could hear all they said, for it was so airy in the morning there wasn't but very few folks a stirrin'. The officer stepped up to the door and rung the bell. He waited a minute and nobody didn't come, and then he rung again. Nobody didn't come that time, and then he rung again, harder than he did afore. Then the landlord stepped up to the door and thumped on to it with his fist, and says he,

"There's none so deaf as them that won't hear; but they needn't think to work us in this way. This door's got to come open by fair means or foul.

and I'll be the first person that goes through it, if I have to stand here all day."

And then he thumped on to the door again with his fist, and the officer rung the bell harder than ever. And they kept at it pretty tight, first one and then t'other, for about ten minutes, and they made sich a racket that the neighbors begun to open their blinds and window-shutters, and look out to see what was the matter. And a little old man poked his bald head out of the third story window, right over where I stood, and says he,

"What are ye making all that clatter over there for? I don't believe you'll raise anybody if you thump all day."

"Why, aint Miss Pinkham and her family to home?" says the landlord.

"Well, I don't believe there's a soul in the house," said the little old man—"if there had been you'd raised 'em long ago."

"But they haven't moved, have they?" says the landlord.

"It's a wonder to me if they haven't," said the old man over my head, "for they was to work till almost midnight, last night, carrying out their things."

At that the landlord and the officer looked kind of thunderstruck.

"Do you know where they've moved to?" says the officer.

"I don't know nothing about it," said the little old man, "nor I don't care, if they wont come back to our neighborhood again; for of all the women to get into every's mess and upset everybody's dish, Miss Pinkham beats all that ever I see."

"And I don't see but she's dished us too," said the officer. "Well, Mr. Brown, what shall we do? How shall we find out where she's gone to?"

"Oh, I can find that out easy enough," says Mr.

Brown, "for she's took one of 'Squire Sharp's houses. But we'll go in by hook or by crook; may be she hasn't got all her things away yet."

So they went down to the basement door—that means a door that goes into a room about half way between a cellar and a room above ground—most all the houses here in New York have 'em—and they both give a shove against the door as tight as they could, and bust it right open. And they went in and looked all over the house, and come out again looking sour enough. Mr. Brown used some pretty harsh words, and swore a little.

"That's always my luck," says he. "Now she's gone with two quarter's rent, and the house is damaged as much as another quarter's rent besides. This is too bad; I had no idea but I should be airy enough to grab her furniture this morning."

Thinks I, Mr. Brown, getting up airy one morning in the year aint quite enough, where a man has slippery folks to deal with, for sich folks commonly want looking after every day, airy and late.

They turned and went away, and I turned tother way and went home. It had now got to be all broad daylight, and there begun to be considerable of a bustle in the streets, and the doors and windows began to be opened, and the hoss-carts began to rattle along over the stones in the streets, and to back up to the doors, and folks was lugging out their housen-stuff and piling it on the carts, as fast as we used to pitch hay in haying-time in Downingville when there was a shower coming up. So I thought it was time for me to begin to hurry, for I hadn't got any of my things packed up yet, though I meant to a had 'em pretty much all packed up the night afore, if Miss Pinkham hadn't bothered us so. When I got up stairs, I found the whole biling of 'em was up, and in pretty considerable kind of a muss. Things was all pitch-poled,

helter-skelter, and mixed up as thick again as tney was when I went out. Polly sot in the corner, looking as if she hadn't a friend in the world, and I believe she was crying a little. Her arm was quite lame. Miss Pinkham was stavin' about like a house-a-fire. She'd pulled our children out of bed, and they was scuddin' about half-dressed, and the little ones was crying; and then she'd pulled and hauled all our things out of the two bed-rooms, and piled 'em about in the fore-room and kitchen, so that it was no small job to get across the rooms anywhere; and she was fast a getting some of her bedsteads and things into the bed-rooms to set up.

"Says I, "Miss Pinkham, what upon airth are you doing?"

"What am I doing?" says she—"why, I'm putting things to rights. I want to get 'em all out of the way snug, so as not to be any trouble to you; for I don't s'pose there anybody in this world that hates to be a trouble to anybody in this world worse than I do. And I wouldn't have you think, because you let me bring my things in here before it was my time to come in, that I mean to be the least trouble to you in the world."

"Oh, no," says I, "Miss Pinkham, I don't think no such thing, by no means. But perhaps if you'd let my things stand till I got ready to pack 'em up, I might know better where to take hold of 'em."

"Oh no," says she, "they're all out on the floor there now as handy as can be for ye. And I've got your closet all cleared out too; and now if you'll jest take hold of t'other side of this ere basket of crockery, and help me carry it in the closet, I'll be settin' it up."

So I took hold of the basket, and helped her along with it, and says I—

"Miss Pinkham, I was very sorry about the acci-



dent that happened to your dishes last night. I hope it didn't break much."

"Only three cups and two sarcers and a mug," says she, "and Miss Downing's was so much like em we've matched em again very well out of hern this morning; all but the mug, and that I told her she might pay me the money for. It cost fifteen pence when 'twas new, but bein it had an old crack in it, I told her she needn't pay me but a shilling for it."

The fact was, Polly had got so kind of nervous, and so afraid of Miss Pinkham, that I dont believe but what she would a gin her up every dish we had in the house if she'd asked for em. I didn't like this way of settling the business very well, and couldn't help thinking about the hedge-hog that begged his way into the woodchuck's hole, only jest to lay and rest him a little while, and then crowded and crowded until he drove the woodchuck clear out, and kept possession of the nest and all there was in it. But I see Miss Pinkham was sich a fiery piece, and as long as we had got to go out, I thought the cheapest way was to say nothing and get away as easily as we could. And it wasn't long before I was still more confirmed in this opinion; for we hadn't but jest set the basket of crockery into the closet, when somebody knocked at the door.

"Come in," says I. And who should come in, but the fat landlord, Mr. Brown, and the officer that I'd seen with him. Miss Pinkham's face turned as red as fire in a minute, and she shet the closet door and took a chair and sot down.

"You've moved, haven't you, Miss Pinkham?" said Mr. Brown, looking pretty starn at her.

"Yes, I have," says she, looking as starn as he did.

"Well, when are you going to pay that rent?"

says he, gritting his teeth together, and edging along up to her.

"When I get it," says she, sticking her chin out at him, and showing her teeth, like a cat that turns round to fight a dog that's drove her into a corner. "And I guess I shant worry myself about it, if 'taint paid very soon," says she, "for you never kept that house in any kind of repairs, Mr. Brown, and you know it. 'Taint scarcely fit to live in."

"Every thing was in good order when you went into it," says he, and all the rent you've ever paid. I've laid out in repairs; and now it wants fifty dollars more laid out right upon it before it will be fit for any body to go into. There isn't a window in the house but what's got glass broke out of it."

"Well, I don't know nothing about how that come," says she, "*we* didn't break none of it."

"Well," says he, "I must have this rent or some security for it, before I leave the house, or I shall take some of your furniture and sell it for what t'will fetch. You've got lots of it piled about here."

At that Miss Pinkham begun to rave. She sprung up on her feet, and stood and looked Mr. Brown in the face, and she grew as red as a blaze. And says she,

"You touch any of this furniture if you dare. And these things about here aint mine neither, they're Mr. Downing's."

At that Mr. Brown turned to me, and says he, "Mr. Downing, is this furniture yourn?"

I wasn't no notion of telling a lie for any of 'em. So, says I, "Some on't 's mine, and some on't isn't."

"Well," says he, "which is yourn, and which is Miss Pinkham's."

Says I, 'She's got matters so mixed up here, 'twould take pretty considerable of a spell to pick em out I guess. But most of these things about the middle of the room is mine, and most of them are

things heaped along that side of the fore-room and that side of the kitchen is hern.

Then he stepped along, and began to look em over, and told the officer to take this thing and that thing and 'tother thing. But Miss Pinkham ketched up a chair and went at him like a tiger, and says she,

“Mr. Brown, if you aint out of this house in one minute, I'll break this chair over your head.” And she fetched a blow at him, that, if he hadn't a dodged it, would a laid him sprawlin. He sprung for the door, and she after him pell-mell. He scrabbled down stairs as fast as he could waddle his heavy fat sides along, and she arter him, holding the chair up jest ready to strike. When they got about half-way down stairs, she happened to slip, and pitched forward against Mr. Brown, and that knocked him down, and away they rolled like a couple of hogsets of molasses clear to the bottom of the stairs. Mr. Brown was rather more scared than hurt, for he thought the old woman had jumped right on to him and knocked him down stairs, and he roared out and called for the officer to come and help him. But the officer was making his way as fast as he could down the back stairs, and got out into the street before Mr. Brown did. I looked out of the window, and I see em both jest turning round the next corner, and Mr. Brown was limping along so lame, he couldn't but jest go. Presently Miss Pinkham came puffing along up the stairs, and muttering to herself, “I'll larn him to come here to meddle with my things; a good-for-nothing brute; I'll larn him, I will.” And says she, “Mr. Downing, I broke your chair driving of him out, but I spose you won't mind that, as I did it as much for your good as for mine; for there's no knowing how many of your things he might a carried off if I hadn't a drove him out.”

I told her it wan't but little consequence about

the chair, especially as she had some pretty much like it, and when we come to load up, she could jest put in one of hern, and that would make it square again. At that she turned round and give me such a look right in the face, that I declare I started back as much as three feet before I knew it; and says she,

"Mr. Downing, if you haint no more gratitude than that, you aint fit to live among Christian people. Do as you would be done by; that's my rule. After I've drove that brute out of your house, and no doubt kept him from carrying off some of your things, do you dare to ask me to pay for that old chair?"—and she stuck her chin out and flashed her eyes jest as she did to Mr. Brown.

"Oh no, mam," says I, "I don't wish it by no means, Miss Pinkham."

So we dropt the subject and said no more about it. If it had been a man I should a known what to a done pretty quick; for I never was made to be drove by a man. But I thought I wouldn't get into a scrape with a woman if she broke all the chairs in the house. So at it I went to packin up. Polly and Cousin Nabby took hold in good arnest, and Jacky and Ichabod handed and fetched things, so that we got 'em into shape pretty fast. About nine o'clock we'd got our boxes and barrels and chests full, and the small ware and dishes put into the wash-tubs and pots and kettles, and I went out to find a team to haul us. I could find teams fast enough, but the trouble was to get 'em. There wasn't no ox teams sich as we have in Downingville; but there was no end to the one hoss teams, haulin little carts, and goin like split all over the city. I run arter one that I see a little ways off with nothin on his cart, and called out to him to stop. He looked round to me and shook his head, and drove on as tight as ever. But I pulled arter

him and hollered again, and swung my hat, and at last he stopt and let me come up to him. Says I,

"Mister, I want to hire you to go and haul up my housen-stuff, if you and I can agree."

He put his thumb up against his nose, and shook his fingers at me, and says he,

"You must be a green one, and no mistake." And he gin his hoss a cut, and his wheels flew over the stones again as fast, and made as much of a rattlin, as cousin John Smith's drumsticks when he's beatin for the regiment muster days.

Then I see another drivin along full chisel, but his cart was empty, so I hollered arter him. He slackened his hoss a minute, and when I told him what I wanted, he said he couldn't go no how, for he'd got fourteen loads engaged to-day, and that was as much as he could possibly get through with, and work half the night too. So he whipped up, and off he went like smoke. I called arter another, and he only shook his head and drove on. I run round from one street to another for about an hour, and my stars! I wouldn't a believed there was so much housen-stuff in America. Every street was full of loaded carts and empty carts. All the empty ones was driving like Jehu, and some of the loaded ones was goin so fast I thought they'd smash every thing all to atoms, except now and then one, where the owner of the housen-stuff was goin along with it to watch it. At last, after trying a good many of 'em, I found one that said he didn't know but he might go.

"Well," says I, "Mister, what'll ye ask?"

"Two dollars and a half a load," says he.

"But that's a most unreasonable price," says I.

"Can't help that," says he, "nobody don't take any less to-day. And some of 'em gets three or four dollars a load. Come, speak quick, if you want me," says he, "for I can't wait."

"Well, now," says I, "Mister, that price is beyond

all reason. Couldn't you and I work it so as to change works? I'm sure I should be willing to do you as good a turn as you would me. If you'll go and work for me half a day with yourself and hoss, I'll work for you a whole day, and take my Jacky with me, and he's a smart boy most fourteen years old."

At that, I'll be hanged if he didn't put his thumb up agin his nose, jest as that teamster did that I stopt first; it seems to be a kind of a way they have here when they want to be very sassy; and says he,

"Rather green, I guess; when d'ye come down?" and he gin his hoss a cut and along he went.

Arter a while I found an old man with a lean old hoss, that had sort of gridiron ribs, and he said he'd go for two dollars a load. I found I was getting into a corner, for it had got to be eleven o'clock, and I'd seen enough of Miss Pinkham to expect she'd begin to *reign* as soon as the clock struck twelve. So I told the old man he might go; and we drove home and went to loading. We laid the bedsteads on lengthways, and then the buro on crossways and back down, and next to that come a chist of clothes, and then two tables bottom upwards, and then two flour barrels full of little things on behind, and a light stand between 'em bottom upwards. And then we filled in a laying of little things all the way from one end to 'tother; and then we laid on the feather bed that you give Polly when we came away from Downingville; and then we put on some baskets, the tubs of dishes and things, and rounded off towards the top with bed-clothes, and light truck and then we hung a row of chairs all round on the stakes. By running a rope round the stakes and binding up pretty well, the cart took on more than I expected, and I begun to be in hopes we might carry it all to one load.

The old man said he could carry it all well enough, if I'd a mind to resk it's staying on. So we went to piling on again, and chucking in and filling up all the holes between things. Some of the top things was rather loose and tottlish, so we put Jacky right up top and let him set straddle of the load to steady it. And then we had to give him a basket full of tumblers and glass things to hold in his hand. Cousin Nabby took little Joshy, and Polly took the looking glass, and I took the military coat that General Jackson give me when I lived to Washington, and hung it across my arm, for I never allow that coat to be jammed away into a chist or buro; and uncle Joshua's portrait, that I've had put into a nice brass frame since we've been here, I took in t'other hand. Then I told the old man he might start along, and we'd walk behind and keep watch. I felt a little anxious about Jacky on top of the load; but he's a smart boy, and he hung on and managed things pretty well. But sich a sight of teams and folks as there was all along the streets, carryin all sorts of housen-stuff, I don't think you ever see or dreamt of. The streets was full of carts goin' and comin, and the side-walks was full of men, women and children carrying things in their hands.

When we had got about half way, the cart had got along a little ways a head of us, and I was looking back at the crowd behind us, when all to once Polly screamed out "there goes Jacky."

I looked, and Jacky was flying in the air like a toad from a trap-stick. One of them great hoss wagons they call omnibusses here, had run full tilt right against the cart, and knocked every thing into a kind of a cocked hat. It didn't exactly upset the cart, but it knocked off about one half the top-load, and sent Jacky clear from the middle of the street on to the side walk. The omnibus fellow drove on as

fast as he could drive, and never sto<sup>p</sup>t to look back. I was afraid Jacky was almost killed, and I run as hard as I could to pick him up; but he struck pretty much on his feet, and wasn't hurt much arter all. He held on to the basket, but the glass was smashed all to pieces. When Polly came up she couldn't help cryin. But I told her it was no use to cry for spilt milk. Jacky was saved alive, and therefore we had a great deal more to be thankful for than we had to cry for. As for the glass dishes and things we could soon go to work and earn some more, and the best way was to pick up the things and get 'em home as well as we could and make the the best of it. So Polly wiped up, and we all went to work to put things to rights as well as we could. A good many of the things was broke, and some was jammed and twisted out of all shape. We had to pile 'em up on the side walk, and Polly and Nabby stay by 'em and watch 'em, while we went along to the house and onloaded what there was left on the cart; and then we went back and picked up the fragments, and about sunset we got 'em all tumbled into the house in heaps, and never was I so glad to get through with a job afore in all my life. We made up some beds on the floor that night, and *if we didn't sleep* I think it's a pity.

I would tell you a great many queer things, how the great rich folks moved, and how the poor folks moved, and about landlords nabbing housen-stuff and selling it at vendue, and about some poor criers bein turned out of doors, and no house to put their heads into, and setting and crying all day and all night out on the side walk. Polly's cried about it a half a dozen times since, she pitied 'em so. But I haint got time to write no more to-day. I hope you and uncle Joshua will come and make us a visit this summer, and then we can tell you all about it. But there's no day in this world, aunt



Keziah, like May-day in New York, you may depend on't. Give my love to Uncle Joshua, and I remain,

Your loving nephew,  
MAJOR JACK DOWNING.

## SKETCHES FROM LIFE.

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[NOTE BY THE PUBLISHERS. The following stories and sketches of humor are inserted at the special request of Major Downing, and by consent of the author.]

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The names used in the following narrative are of course fictitious ; but the incidents all occurred substantially as here related, and the parties are respectable gentlemen now living and doing business in this bustling city of New York. The writer had the account directly from the lips of the principal actor. It also should be added that Mr. Sharp described in this article is not Squire Sharp, the landlord, mentioned by Major Downing in his excellent letters, though it is not improbable he may be a second or third cousin.]

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### PERSEVERANCE:

OR PETER PUNCTUAL'S WAY TO COLLECT BILLS.

BY SEBA SMITH.

Some few years ago, Peter Punctual, an honest and industrious young fellow from Yankee land—I say Yankee land, but I freely confess that is merely an inference of mine, drawn from circumstances of this story itself ; but if my readers, after perusing it, do not come to the same conclusion, they may set him down as coming from any other land they please ; but for myself, were I on a jury, and under oath, I would bring him in a Yankee. This same Peter Punctual, some few years ago, came into New York, and attempted to turn a penny and get an honest living by procuring subscribers to vari-

ous magazines and periodicals, on his own hook. That is, he would receive a quantity of magazines from a distant publisher, at a discount, and get up his own list of subscribers about the city, and serve them through the year at the regular subscription price, which would leave the amount of the said discount a clear profit in his pocket, or rather a compensation for his time and labor. There are many persons in this city who obtain a livelihood in the same way.

Peter's commissions being small, and his capital still smaller, he was obliged to transact his business with great care and circumspection, in order to make both ends meet. He adopted a rule therefore to make all his subscribers pay their year's subscription in advance. Such things could be done in those days when business was brisk, and the people were strangers to "hard times." In canvassing for subscribers, one day, through the lower part of the city, and in the principal business streets, he observed a store which had the air of doing a heavy business, and read upon the sign over the door, "Solomon Sharp, Importer" of certain wares and merchandize. The field looked inviting, and in Peter went with his samples under his arm, and inquired for Mr. Sharp. The gentleman was pointed out to him by the clerks, and Peter stepped up and asked him if he would not like to subscribe for some magazines.

"What sort of ones have you got there?" said Mr. S.

"Three or four different kinds," said Peter, laying the specimens on the desk before him—"please to look at them and suit yourself."

Sharp tumbled them over and examined them one after another, and at last took up "Buckingham's New England Magazine," published at Boston.

"What are your terms for this?" said he; "I don't know but I would subscribe for this."

"Five dollars a year in advance," said Peter, "to be delivered carefully every month at your store or house."

"But I never pay in advance for these things," said Sharp. "It's time enough to pay for a thing when you get it. I'll subscribe for it, if you have a mind to receive your pay at the end of the year, and not otherwise."

"That's against my rule," said Peter; "I have all my subscribers pay in advance."

"Well, it's against my rule to pay for anything before I get it," said Sharp; "so if you haven't a mind to take my subscription, to be paid at the end of the year, you won't get it at all. That's the long and the short of the matter."

Peter paused a little, and queried with himself as to what he had better do. The man was evidently doing a large business, and was undoubtedly rich—a wholesale dealer and an importer—there could not possibly be any danger of losing the subscription in such a case: and would it not be better to break over his rule for once, than to lose so good a subscriber.

"Well, what say?" said Sharp; "do as you like; but those are my only terms. I will not pay for a thing before I get it."

"On the whole," said Peter, "I have a good mind to break over my rule this time, for I don't like to lose a good subscriber when I can find one. I believe I'll put your name down, sir. Where will you have it left?"

"At my house," said Mr. Sharp, which was about a mile and a half from his store, away up town.

The business being thus concluded, Peter took up his magazines, bade Mr. Sharp good morning,

and left the store. No further personal intercourse occurred between them during the year. But Peter, who was his own carrier, as well as canvasser, regularly every month delivered the New England Magazine at Mr. Sharp's door. And in a few days after the year expired, he made out his bill for the five dollars, and called at Mr. Sharp's store for the money. He entered with as much confidence that he should receive the chink at once, as he would have had in going with a check for the like sum into the Bank of the United States, during that institution's palmiest days. He found Mr. Sharp at his desk, and presented him the bill. That gentleman took it and looked at it, and then looked at Peter.

"Oh! ah, good morning," said he, "you are the young man who called here on this business nearly a year ago. Well, the year has come round, has it?"

"Yes, I believe it has," said Peter.

"Well, bills of this kind," said Mr. Sharp, "are paid at the house. We don't attend to them here; you just take it to the house, any time when you are passing, and it will be settled."

"Oh, very well, sir," said Peter, bowing, and left the store. "Doing too large a business at the store, I suppose," he continued, to himself, as he walked up the street, "to attend to little things of this kind. Don't like to be bothered with 'em, probably."

But Peter thought he might as well make a finish of the business, now he was out; so he went directly to the house, and rung at the door. The servant girl soon made her appearance.

"Mrs. Sharp within?" said Peter.

"Yes, sir," said the girl.

"Jest carry this bill to her, if you please, and ask her if she will hand you the money for it."

The girl took the bill into the house, and presently returned with the answer, that "Mrs. Sharp says

she doesn't pay none of these 'ere things here—you must carry it to the store."

"Please to carry it back to Mrs. Sharp," said Peter, "and tell her Mr. Sharp desired me to bring the bill here, and said it would be paid at the house."

This message brought Mrs. Sharp herself to the door, to whom Peter raised his hat and bowed very politely.

"I haven't nothing at all to do with the bills here at the house," said the lady; "they must be carried to the store—that's the place to attend to them."

"Well, mam," said Peter, "I carried it to the store, and presented it to Mr. Sharp, and he told me to bring it to the house and you would pay it here, and that he couldn't attend to it at the store."

"But he couldn't mean that I should pay it," said Mrs. Sharp, "for he knows I haven't the money."

"But he said so," said Peter.

"Well then there must be some mistake about it," said the lady.

"I beg your pardon, mam," said Peter, "it's possible there may be," and he put the bill in his pocket, bowed and left the house.

"It is very queer," thought Peter to himself as he walk away a little vexed. "I can't conceive how there could be any mistake about it, though it is possible there may be. There couldn't be any mistake on my part, for I'm sure I understood him. May be he thought she had money at the house when she hadn't. I guess it will all come out right enough in the end."

Consoling himself with these reflections, Peter Punctual thought he would let Mr. Sharp rest two or three days, and not show any anxiety by calling again in a hurry. He would not be so unwise as to offend a good subscriber, and run the hazard of losing him, by an appearance of too much haste in

presenting his bills. Accordingly, in about three days, he called again at Mr. Sharp's store, and asked him in a low voice, so that no one should overhear, if it was convenient for him to take that little bill for the magazine to-day.

"But I told you," said Mr. Sharp, "to carry that bill to the house; I can't attend to it here."

"Yes, sir, so I understood you," said Peter, "and I carried it to the house, and Mrs. Sharp said she couldn't pay it there, for she had no money, and I must bring it to the store."

"Oh, strange," said Mr. Sharp; "well, she didn't properly understand it then. But I am too much engaged to attend to you to-day; you call again, or call at the house sometime, when I am there."

Upon this, he turned to his desk and began to write with great earnestness, and Peter left the store. The affair began to grow a little vexatious, and Peter felt a little nettled. Still, he supposed that people doing such very large business *did* find it difficult to attend to these little matters, and doubtless it would be set right when he should call again.

After waiting patiently a couple of weeks, Peter called again at Mr. Sharp's store. When he entered the door, Mr. Sharp was looking at a newspaper; but on glancing at Peter, he instantly dropped the paper, and fell to writing at his desk with great rapidity. Peter waited respectfully a few minutes, unwilling to disturb the gentleman till he should appear to be a little more at leisure. But after waiting some time without seeing any prospect of Mr. Sharp's completing the very pressing business before him, he approached him with deference, and asked if it would be convenient for him to take that little bill for the magazine to-day. Sharp turned and looked at Peter very sternly.

"I can't be bothered with these little things," said

he, "when I am so much engaged. I am exceedingly busy to-day—a good many heavy orders waiting—you must call at the house, and hand the bill to me or my wife, no matter which." And he turned to his desk, and continued to write, without saying anything more.

Peter began to think he had got hold of a hard customer: but he had no idea of giving up the chase. He called at the house several times afterward, but Mr. Sharp never happened to be at home. Once he ventured to send the bill again by the girl to Mrs. Sharp, who returned for answer, that she had nothing to do with such bills; he must carry it to the store.

At last, after repeated calls, he found Mr. Sharp one day at home. He came to the door, and Peter presented the bill. Mr. Sharp expressed some surprise and regret that he had come away from the store, and forgot to put any money in his pocket. Peter would have to call some other day. Accordingly, Peter Punctual retired, with a full determination to call some other day, and that not very far distant; for it had now been several months that he had been beaten back and forth like a shuttlecock between Mr. Sharp's store and Mr. Sharp's house, and he was getting to be rather tired of the game.

Having ascertained from the girl at what hour the family dined, he called the next day precisely at the dinner hour. He rung at the door, and when the girl opened it, Peter stepped into the hall.

"Is Mr. Sharp in?" said Peter.

"Yes, sir," said the girl; "he's up stairs. I'll speak to him if you want to see him."

"Yes," said Peter, "and I'll take a seat in the parlor till he comes down."

As he said this, Peter walked into the parlor and seated himself upon an elegant sofa. The parlor



was richly furnished with Brussels carpet, the best of mahogany furniture, a splendid piano, &c., &c. ; and in the back parlor, to which folding doors were open, everything appeared with corresponding elegance. A table was there spread, upon which dinner seemed to be nearly ready. Presently the girl returned from the chamber, and informed Peter, that Mr. Sharp said "it was jest the dinner hour now, and he would have to call again."

"Please to go and tell Mr. Sharp," said Peter, "that I must see him, and I'll wait till he comes down."

The girl carried the message, and Mr. Sharp soon made his appearance in the parlor. A frown passed over his brow as he looked at Peter and saw him sitting so much at ease, and apparently so much at home, upon the sofa. Peter rose and asked him politely if it was convenient for him to take that little bill to-day.

"No," said Sharp, "it is not; and if it was, I wouldn't take it at this hour. It's a very improper time to call upon such an errand just as one is going to sit down to dinner. You must call again; but don't call at dinner time; or you may drop into the store sometime, and perhaps I may find time to attend to it there."

"Well, now, Mr. Sharp," said Peter, with rather a determined look, "I can't stand this kind of business any longer, that's a fact. I'm a poor man, and I suppose you are a rich one. I can't afford to lose five dollars, and I'm too poor to spend any more time in running after it and trying to collect it. I must eat, as well as other folks, and if you can't pay me the five dollars to-day, to help me pay my board at my regular boarding-house, I'll stay here and board it out at your table."

"You will, will you?" said Sharp, looking daggers, and stepping toward Peter. "If you give me

a word of your impudence, you may find it'll be a long time before you collect your bill."

"It's been a long time already," said Peter, "and I can't afford to wait any longer. My mind is made up; if you don't pay me now, I'm going to stay here and board it out."

Sharp colored, and looked at the door, and then at Peter.

"Come, come, young man," said he, advancing with rather a threatening attitude toward Peter, "the sooner you leave the house peaceably the better."

"Now, sir," said Peter, fixing his black eyes upon Sharp, with an intenseness that he could not but feel, "I am a small man, and you are considerable of a large one; but my mind is made up. I am not going to starve, when there's food enough that I have an honest claim upon."

So saying, he took his seat again very deliberately upon the sofa. Sharp paused; he looked agitated and angry; and after waiting a minute, apparently undecided what to do, he left the parlor and went up stairs. In a few minutes, the servant rung for dinner. Mrs. Sharp came into the dining room and took her seat at the head of the table. Mr. Sharp followed, and seated himself opposite his lady; and between them, and on the right hand of of Mrs. Sharp, sat another lady, probably some friend or relative of the family. When they were well seated, and Mr. Sharp was beginning to carve, Peter walked out of the parlor, drew another chair up to the table, and seated himself very composedly opposite the last mentioned lady. Mr. Sharp colored a good deal, but kept on carving. Mrs. Sharp stared very wildly, first at Peter and then at her husband.

"What in the world does this mean?" said she.

"Mr. Sharp I didn't know we were to have company to dinner."

"We are not," said the husband. "This young man has the impudence to take his seat at the table unasked and says he is going to board out the amount of the bill."

"Well, really, this is a pretty piece of politeness," said Mrs. Sharp, looking very hard at Peter.

"Madam," said Peter, "hunger will drive a man through a stone wall. I must have my board somewhere."

No reply was made to this, and the dinner went on without any further reference to Peter at present. Mr. Sharp helped his wife, and then the other lady, and then himself, and they all fell to eating. Peter looked around him for a plate and knife and fork, but there were none on the table but what were in use. Peter, however, was not to be baffled. He reached a plate of bread, and tipping the bread upon the table cloth, appropriated the plate for his own convenience. He then took possession of the carving knife and fork, helped himself bountifully to meat and vegetables, and commenced eating his dinner with the greatest composure imaginable. These operations on the part of Peter, had the effect to suspend all operations for the time on the part of the rest of the company. The ladies had laid down their knives and forks, and were staring at Peter in wild astonishment.

"For mercy's sake, Mr. Sharp," said the lady of the house, "can't we pick up money enough about the house to pay this man his five dollars and send him off? I declare this is too provoking. I'll see what I can find."

With that she rose and left the room. Mr. Sharp presently followed her. They returned again in a minute, and Mr. Sharp laid a five dollar bill before Peter, and told him he would thank him to leave

the house. Peter examined the bill to see if it was a good one, and very quietly folded it and put it into his pocket. He then drew out a little pocket ink-stand and a piece of paper, laid it upon the table before him, wrote a receipt for the money, which he handed to Mr. Sharp, rose from the table, bowed to the company and retired, thinking as he left the house that he had had full enough of the custom of Solomon Sharp, the importer.

Peter Punctual still followed his vocation of circulating magazines. He had no intention of ever darkening the door of Mr. Solomon Sharp's store again, but somehow or other, two or three years after, as he was canvassing for subscribers in the lower part of the city, he happened to blunder into the same store accidentally, without noticing the name upon the door. Nor did he discover his mistake, until he had nearly crossed the store and attracted the attention of Mr. Sharp himself, who was at his accustomed seat at the desk where Peter had before so often seen him. Peter thought, as he had got fairly into the store, he would not back out; so he stepped up to Mr. Sharp without a look of recognition, and asked if he would not like to subscribe for some magazines. Mr. Sharp, who either did not recognize Peter, or chose not to appear to recognize him, took the magazines and looked at them, and found a couple he said he would like to take, and inquired the terms. They were each three dollars a year in advance.

"But I don't pay in advance for anything," said Sharp. "If you have a mind to leave them at my house, to be paid for at the end of the year, you may put me down for these two."

"No," said Peter, "I don't wish to take any subscribers, but those who pay in advance."

Saying this, he took up his specimens, and was

going out of the door, when Mr. Sharp called him back.

"Here young man, you may leave those two at any rate," said he, "and here's your advance," handing him the six dollars.

"Where will you have them left?" said Peter.

"At my house, up town," said Mr. Sharp, describing the street and number.

The business being completed, Peter retired, much astonished at his good luck. He again became a monthly visitor at Mr. Sharp's door, where he regularly delivered to the servant girl the two magazines. Two or three months after this, when he called one day on his usual round, the girl told him that Mr. Sharp wanted to see him, and desired he would call at the store. Peter felt not a little curious to know what Mr. Sharp might have to say to him; so in the course of the same day he called at Mr. Sharp's store.

"Good morning," said Mr. Sharp as Peter entered; "come, take a chair, and sit down here."

Peter, with a "good morning, sir," did as he was desired.

"Ain't you the young man," said Mr. Sharp, with a comical kind of a look, "who set out to board out a subscription to the New England Magazine, at my house two or three years ago."

"Yes," said Peter, "I believe I'm the same person who once had the honor of taking board at your house."

"Well," said Mr. Sharp, "I want to give you a job."

"What is it?" said Peter.

"Here, I want you to collect these bills for me," said Mr. Sharp, taking a bundle from his desk, "for I'll be hanged if I can; I've tried till I'm tired."

Whereupon he opened the bundle and assorted

out the bills, and made a schedule of them, amounting, in the aggregate, to about a thousand dollars.

"There," said he, "I will give upon that list ten per cent commission on all you collect; and on that list I'll give you twenty-five per cent on all you collect. What say you? will you undertake the job?"

"Well, I'll try," said Peter, "and see what I can do with them. How soon must I return them?"

"Take your own time for it," said Mr. Sharp; "I've seen enough of you to know pretty well what you are."

Peter accordingly took the bills and entered on his new task, following it up with diligence and perseverance. In a few weeks he called again at Sharp's store.

"Well," said Mr. Sharp, "have you made out to collect anything on those bills?"

"Yes," said Peter.

"There were some of the ten per cent list that I thought it probable you might collect," said Mr. Sharp. "How many have you collected?"

"All of them," said Peter.

"All of them?" said Sharp; "well, fact, that's much more than I expected. The twenty-five per cent list was all dead dogs, wasn't it? You got nothing on them, I suppose, did you?"

"Yes, I did," said Peter.

"Did you though? How much?" said Sharp.

"I got them all," said Peter.

"Oh, that's all a joke," said Sharp.

"No, it isn't a joke," said Peter. "I've collected every dollar of them, and here's the money," taking out his pocket-book, and counting out the bills.

Mr. Sharp received the money with the most perfect astonishment. He had not expected one half of the amount would ever be collected.

He counted out the commissions on the ten per

cent list, and then the commissions on the twenty-five per cent list, and handed the sum over to Peter. And then he counted out fifty dollars more, and asked Peter to accept that as a present; "partly," said he, "because you have accomplished this task so very far beyond my expectations, and partly because my acquaintance with you has taught me one of the best lessons of my life. It has taught me the value of perseverance and punctuality. I have reflected upon it much ever since you undertook to board out the bill for the magazine at my house."

"Why yes," said Peter, "I think perseverance and punctuality are great helps in the way of business."

"If every person in the community," said Mr. Sharp, "would make it a point to pay all of his bills promptly, the moment they become due, what a vast improvement it would make in the condition of society all round. That would put people in a condition, at all times, to be *able* to pay their bills promptly."

We might add, that Peter Punctual afterward opened a store in the city, in a branch of business which brought Mr. Sharp to be a customer to him, and he has been one of his best customers ever since, paying all of his bills promptly, and whenever Peter requires it, even paying in advance.

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**POLLY GRAY AND THE DOCTORS.**

BY SEBA SMITH.

It was a dark, and rainy night in June, when Deacon Gray, about ten o'clock in the evening, drove his horse and wagon up to the door, on his return from market.

"Oh dear, Mr. Gray," exclaimed his wife, as she met him at the door, "I'm dreadful glad you've come; Polly's so sick, I'm afraid she won't live till mornin', if something ain't done for her."

"Polly is always ailing," said the deacon deliberately; "I guess it's only some of her old aches and pains. Just take this box of sugar in; it has been raining on it this hour."

"Well, do come right in, Mr. Gray, for you don't know what a desput case she is in; I daren't leave her a minute."

"You are always scared half to death," said the deacon, "if anything ails Polly; but you know she always gets over it again. Here's coffee and tea and some other notions rolled up in this bag," handing her another bundle to carry into the house.

"Well, but Mr. Gray, don't pray stop for bundles nor nothin' else. You must go right over after Doctor Longley, and get him here as quick as you can."

"Oh, if it's only Doctor Longley she wants," said the deacon carelessly, "I guess she aint so dangerous after all."

"Now, Mr. Gray, jest because Doctor Longley is a young man and about Polly's age, that you should make such an unfeelin' expression as that, I think is too bad."

The deacon turned away without making a reply, and began to move the harness from the horse.

"Mr. Gray, ain't you going after the doctor?" said Mrs. Gray, with increasing impatience.

"I'm going to turn the horse into the pasture, and then I'll come in and see about it," said the deacon.

A loud groan from Polly drew Mrs. Gray hastily into the house. The deacon led his horse a quarter of a mile to the pasture; let down the bars and turned him in; put all the bars carefully up; hunted round and found a stick to drive in as a wedge to fasten the top bar: went round the barn to see that the doors were all closed; got an armful of dry straw and threw it into the pig-pen; called the dog from his kennel, patted him on his head, and went into the house.

"I'm afraid she's dying," said Mrs. Gray, as the deacon entered.

"You are always scared half out of your wits," said the deacon, "if there's anything the matter. I'll come in as soon as I've took off my coat and boots and put on some dry ones."

Mrs. Gray ran back to attend upon Polly; but before the deacon had got ready to enter the room, Mrs. Gray screamed again with the whole strength of her lungs,

"Mr. Gray, Mr. Gray, do make haste, she's in a fit."

This was the first sound that had given the deacon any uneasiness about the matter. He had been accustomed for years to hear his wife "worry" about Polly, and had heard her predict her death so often from very slight illness, that he had come to regard such scenes and such predictions with as little attention as he did the rain that pattered against the window. But the word *fit* was something he had never heard applied in these cases before, and the sound of it gave him a strange feel-

ing of apprehension. He had just thrown off his boots and put his feet into dry shoes, and held a dry coat in his hand, when this last appeal came to his ear and caused him actually to hasten into the room.

"Polly, what's the matter now?" said the deacon, beginning to be somewhat agitated, as he approached the bedside.

Polly was in violent spasms, and heeded not the inquiry. The deacon took hold of her arm, and repeated the question more earnestly and in a tender tone.

"You may as well speak to the dead," said Mrs. Gray; "she's past hearing or speaking."

The deacon's eyes looked wild, and his face grew very long.

"Why didn't you tell me how sick she was when I first got home?" said the deacon, with a look of rebuke.

"I did tell you when you first come," said Mrs. Gray, sharply, "and you didn't take no notice on it."

"You didn't tell me anything about how sick she was," said the deacon; "you only spoke jest as you used to, when she wasn't hardly sick at all."

The subject here seemed to subside by mutual consent, and both stood with their eyes fixed upon Polly, who was apparently struggling in the fierce agonies of death. In a few minutes however she came out of the spasm, breathed comparatively easy, and lay perfectly quiet. The deacon spoke to her again. She looked up with a wild delirious look, but made no answer.

"I'll go for the doctor," said the deacon, "it may be he can do something for her, though she looks to me as though it was a gone goose with her."

Saying this, he put on his hat and coat and start-

ed. Having half a mile to go, and finding the doctor in bed, it was half an hour before he returned with Doctor Longley in his company. In the meantime Mrs. Gray had called in old Mrs. Livermore who lived next door, and they had lifted Polly up and put a clean pillow upon the bed, and a clean cap on her head, and had been round and "slicked up" the room a little, for Mrs. Livermore said, "Doctor Longley was such a nice man she always loved to see things look tidy where he was coming to."

The deacon came in and hung his hat up behind the door, and Doctor Longley followed with his hat in his hand and a small pair of saddle-bags on his arm. Mrs. Gray stood at one side of the bed, and Mrs. Livermore at the other, and the doctor laid his hat and saddle-bags on the table that stood by the window, and stepped immediately to the bedside.

"Miss Gray, are you sick?" said the doctor, taking the hand of the patient.

No answer or look from the patient gave any indication that she heard the question.

"How long has she been ill?" said the doctor.

"Ever since mornin'," said Mrs. Gray. "She got up with a head-ache, jest after her father went away to market, and smart pains inside, and she's been growing worse all day."

"And what have you given her?" said the doctor.

"Nothing, but arb-drink," said Mrs. Gray; "whenever she felt worse, I made her take a good deal of arb-drink, because that, you know, is always good, doctor. And besides, when it can't do no good, it would do no hurt."

But what sort of drinks have you given her?" said the doctor.

"Well, I give her most all sorts, for we had a plenty of 'em in the house," said Mrs. Gray. "I

give her sage, and peppermint, and sparemint, and cammermile, and pennyryal, and motherwort, and balm ; you know, balm is very coolin,' doctor, and sometimes she'd be very hot, and then I'd make her drink a good dose of balm."

"Give me a candle," said the doctor.

The deacon brought a candle and held it over the patient's head. The doctor opened her mouth and examined it carefully for the space of a minute. He felt her pulse another minute, and looked again into her mouth:

"Low pulse, but heavy and labored respiration," said the doctor.

"What do you think ails her?" said Mrs. Gray.

The doctor shook his head.

"Do you think you can give her anything to help her?" said the deacon anxiously.

The doctor looked very grave, and fixed his eyes thoughtfully on the patient for a minute, but made no reply to the deacon's question.

"Why didn't you send for me sooner?" at last said the doctor, turning to Mrs. Gray.

"Because I thought my arb-drink would help her, and so I kept trying it all day till it got to be dark, and then she got be so bad I didn't dare to leave her till Mr. Gray got home."

"It's a great pity," said the doctor, turning from the bed to the table and opening his saddle-bags. "Thousands and thousands of lives are lost only by delaying to send for medical advice till it is too late ; thousands that might have been saved as well as not, if only taken in season."

"But doctor, you don't think it's too late for Polly, do you?" said Mrs. Gray.

"I think her case, to say the least, is extremely doubtful," said the doctor. "Her appearance is very remarkable. Whatever her disease is, it has made such progress, and life is so nearly extinct,

that it is impossible to tell what were the original symptoms, and consequently what applications are best to be made."

"Well, now, doctor," said Mrs. Livermore, "excuse me for speakin'; but I'm a good deal older than you are, and have seen a great deal of sickness in my day, and I've been in here with Polly a number of times to-day, and sometimes this evening, and I'm satisfied, doctor, there's something the matter of her insides."

"Undoubtedly," said the doctor, looking very grave.

This new hint from Mrs. Livermore seemed to give Mrs. Gray new hope, and she appealed again to the doctor.

"Well, now, doctor," said she, "don't you think Mrs. Livermore has the right of it?"

"Most unquestionably," said the doctor.

"Well, then, doctor, if you should give her something that's pretty powerful to operate inwardly, don't you think it might help her?"

"It might, and it might not," said the doctor; "the powers of life are so nearly exhausted, I must tell you frankly I have very little hope of being able to rally them. There is not life enough left to indicate the disease or show the remedies that are wanted. Applications now must be made entirely in the dark, and leave the effect to chance."

At this, Mrs. Livermore took the candle and was proceeding to remove it from the room, when the doctor, perceiving her mistake, called her back. He did not mean to administer the medicine literally in a dark room, but simply in a state of darkness and ignorance as to the nature of the disease. It was a very strange case; it was certain life could hold out but a short time longer; he felt bound to do something, and therefore proceeded to prepare such applications and remedies as his best judg-

ment dictated. These were administered without confidence, and their effect awaited with painful solicitude. They either produced no perceptible effect at all, or very different from the ordinary results of such applications.

"I should like," said Doctor Longley to the deacon, "to have you call in Doctor Stubbs; this is a very extraordinary case, and I should prefer that some other medical practitioner might be present."

The deacon accordingly hastened to call Doctor Stubbs, a young man who had come into the place a short time before, with a high reputation, but not a favorite with the deacon and his family, on account of his being rather fresh from college, and full of modern innovations.

After Doctor Stubbs had examined the patient, and made various inquiries of the family, he and Doctor Longley held a brief consultation. Their united wisdom, however, was not sufficient to throw any light upon the case or to afford any relief.

"Have you thought of poison?" said Doctor Longley.

"Yes," said Doctor Stubbs, "but there are certain indications in the case, which forbid that altogether. Indeed, I can form no satisfactory opinion about it; it is the most anomalous case I ever knew."

Before their conference was brought to a close, the deacon called them, saying he believed Polly was a going. They came into the room and hastened to the bed-side.

"Yes," said Doctor Stubbs, looking at the patient, "those are dying struggles; in a short time all her troubles in this life will be over."

The patient sunk gradually and quietly away, and in the course of two hours after the arrival of Doctor Stubbs, all signs of life were gone.

"The Lord's will be done," said the deacon, as



he stood by the bed and saw her chest heave for the last time.

Mrs. Gray sat in the corner of the room with her apron to her face weeping aloud. Old Mrs. Livermore and two other females, who had been called in during the night, were already busily employed in preparing for laying out the corpse.

It was about daybreak when the two doctors left the house and started for home.

"Very singular case," said Doctor Stubbs, who spoke with more ease and freedom, now that they were out of the way of the afflicted family. "We ought not to give it up so, doctor; we ought to follow this case up till we ascertain what was the cause of her death. What say to a post mortem examination?"

"I always dislike them," said Doctor Longley; "they are ugly uncomfortable jobs; and besides, I doubt whether the deacon's folks would consent to it."

"It is important for us, as well as for the cause of the science," said Doctor Stubbs, "that something should be done about it. We are both young, and it may have an injurious bearing upon our reputation if we are not able to give any explanation of the case. I consider my reputation at stake as well as yours, as I was called in for consultation. There will doubtless be an hundred rumors afloat, and the older physicians, who look upon us, you know, with rather an evil eye, will be pretty sure to lay hold of the matter and turn it greatly to our disadvantage, if we cannot show facts for our vindication. The deacon's folks *must* consent, and you had better go down after breakfast and have a talk with the deacon about it."

Doctor Longley felt the force of the reasoning and consented to go. Accordingly, after breakfast, he returned to Deacon Gray's, and kindly offered

his services, if there was any assistance he could render in making preparations for the funeral. The deacon felt much obliged to him, but didn't know as there was anything for which they particularly needed his assistance. The doctor then broached the subject of the very sudden and singular death of Polly, and how important it was for the living that the causes of such a sudden death should, if possible, be ascertained, and delicately hinted that the only means of obtaining this information, so desirable for the benefit of the science and so valuable for all living, was by opening and examining the body after death.

At this the deacon looked up at him with such an awful expression of holy horror, that the doctor saw at once it would be altogether useless to pursue the subject further. Accordingly, after advising, on account of the warm weather and the patient dying suddenly and in full blood, not to postpone the funeral later than that afternoon, the doctor took his leave.

"Well, what is the result?" said Doctor Stubbs, as Doctor Longley entered his door.

"Oh, as I expected," said Doctor Longley. "The moment I hinted at the subject to the deacon, I saw by his looks, if it were to save his own life and the lives of all his friends, he never would consent to it."

"Well, 'tis astonishing," said Doctor Stubbs, "that people who have common sense should have so little sense on a subject of this kind. I won't be baffled so, Doctor Longley; I'll tell you what I'll do. What time is she to be buried?"

"This afternoon," said Doctor Longley.

"In the burying ground by the old meeting-house up the road, I suppose," said Doctor Stubbs.

"Yes, undoubtedly," replied Dr. Longley.

"Well, I'll have that corpse taken up this night,

and you may depend upon it," said Doctor Stubbs. "I'll not only ascertain the cause of her death, but I want a subject for dissection, and she having died so suddenly will make an excellent one."

Doctor Longley shuddered a little at the bold project of Doctor Stubbs. "You know, doctor, there is a law against it," said he, "and besides, the burying ground is in such a lonely place and surrounded by woods, I don't believe you can find anybody with nerve enough to go there and take up a newly buried corpse in the night."

"Let me alone for that," said Doctor Stubbs. "I know a chap that would do it every night in the week if I wanted him to; a friend of mine down there in the college, in the senior class. He has nerve enough to go anywhere, and is up to a job of this kind at any time. The business is all arranged, doctor, and I shall go through with it. Joe Palmer is the man for it, and Rufus Barnes will go with him. I'd go myself, but it would be more prudent for me to be at home, for in case of accident, and the thing should be discovered, suspicion would be likely to fall on me, and it would be important for me to be able to prove where I was. Rufus must go to the funeral and see whereabouts the corpse is buried, so he can find the place in a dark night, and I shall have to go down to the college the first of the evening after Joe myself, and get him started, and then come right home, and stay at home, so that I can prove an alibi in case of any questions. Don't I understand it, doctor?"

"Yes, full well enough," said Doctor Longley, "but I had rather you would be in the scrape than I should."

That evening, half an hour after dark, there was a light rap at Joe Palmer's door in the third story of one of the college buildings. The door was partly open, and Joe said "come in." No one en-

tered, but in a few moments the rap was heard again. "Come in," said Joe. Still no one entered. Presently a figure, concealed under a cloak and with muffled face, appeared partly before the door, and said something in a low voice. Joe looked wild and agitated. Some college scrape, he thought, but what was the nature of it he could not divine. The figure looked mysterious. Presently the voice was heard again, and understood to utter the word Palmer. Joe was still more agitated, and looked at his chum most inquiringly. His chum stepped to the door and asked what was wanting. The figure drew back into the darkness of the hall, and answered in a faint voice, that he wanted Palmer. At last Palmer screwed his resolution up to the sticking point and ventured as far as the door, while his chum stepped back into the room. The figure again came forward and whispered to Palmer to come out, for he wanted to speak with him.

"But who are you?" said Palmer.

The figure partially uncovered his face, and whispered "Doctor Stubbs."

Palmer at once recognized him, and stepped back as bold as a lion, and took his hat and went out. In a few minutes he returned and told his chum, with rather a mysterious air, that he was going out with a friend to be gone two or three hours, that he need not feel uneasy about him, and might leave the door unfastened for him till he returned.

Doctor Stubbs, having given Joe and Rufus full directions how to proceed, telling them to get a large wide chaise, so that they could manage to carry the corpse conveniently, and informing them where they could find spades and shovels deposited by the side of the road for the purpose, left them and hastened home.

"Well now, Rufe," said Joe, "we'll just go over to Jake Rider's and get one of his horses and chaise.

But we needn't be in a hurry, for we don't want to get there much before midnight; and we'll go into the store here and get a drink of brandy to begin with, for this kind of business needs a little stimulus."

Having braced their nerves with a drink of brandy, they proceeded to Jacob Rider's.

"Jake, give us a horse and chaise to take a ride three or four hours," said Joe. "You needn't mind setting up for us; we'll put the horse up when we come back, and take good care of him; we know where to put him. We don't want a nag; an old steady horse that will give us an easy pleasant ride."

"Old Tom is jest the horse you want," said Jacob, "and there's a good easy going chaise."

"That chaise isn't wide enough," said Joe; "give us the widest one you've got."

"But that's plenty wide enough for two to ride in," said Jacob; "I don't see what you want a wider chaise than that for."

"Oh, I like to have plenty of elbow room," said Joe.

"Maybe you are going to have a lady to ride with you," said Jacob.

Joe laughed, and whispered to Rufus that Jake had hit nearer the mark than he was aware of.

Jacob selected another chaise. "There is one," said he "wide enough for three to ride in, and even four upon a pinch."

"That'll do," said Joe; "now put in old Tom."

The horse was soon harnessed, and Joe and Rufus jumped into the chaise and drove off.

"Confound these college chaps," said Jacob to himself as they drove out of the yard; "they are always a sky-larkin' somewhere or other. There's one thing in it though, they pay me well for my horses. But these two fellows wanting such a

broad chaise ; they are going to have a real frolic somewhere to night. I've a plaguy good mind to jump on to one of the horses and follow, and see what sort of snuff they are up to. It's so dark I could do it just as well as not, without the least danger of their seeing me."

No sooner thought than done. Jake at once mounted one of his horses, and followed the chaise. There was no moon, and the night was cloudy and dark ; but a slight rattle in one of the wheels of the chaise, enabled him easily to follow it, though entirely out of sight. Having gone about two miles the chaise stopped at the corner, about a hundred rods from the house of Dr. Stubbs. Jake got off and hitched his horse, and crept carefully along by the side of the fence to see what was done there. By stooping down and looking up against a clear patch of sky, he could see one of the two leave the chaise and go to the fence by the side of the road and return again, carrying something in his arms to the chaise. He repeated this operation twice ; but what he carried Jake could not discern. Perhaps it might be some baskets of refreshments. They were going off to some house to have a frolic. The chaise moved on again, and Jake mounted his horse and followed. They went up the road till they came to the old meeting-house ; they passed it a little, and came against the old burying ground. The chaise stopped and Jake stopped. The chaise stood still for the space of about five minutes, and there was not the least sound to be heard in any direction. At last, from the little rattle of the chaise wheel, he perceived they were moving at a moderate walk. They came to the corner of the burying ground, and turned a little out of the road and stopped the chaise under the shadow of a large spreading tree, where it could not be perceived by

any one passing in the road, even should the clouds brush away and leave it starlight.

"It is very odd," thought Jake, "that they should stop at such a place as this in a dark night; the last place in the world I should think of stopping at."

Jake dismounted and hitched his horse a little distance, and crept carefully up to watch their movements. They took something out of the chaise, passed along by the fence, went through the little gate, and entered the burying ground. Here a new light seemed to flash upon Jake's mind.

"I hope no murder has been committed," thought he to himself; "but it's pretty clear something is to be buried here to-night that the world must know nothing about."

Jake was perplexed, and in doubt as to what he should do. He had some conscience, and felt as though he ought to investigate the matter, and put a stop to the business if anything very wicked was going on. But then there were other considerations that weighed on the other side. If murder had been committed it was within the range of possibility, and not very unreasonable to suppose, that murder might be committed again to conceal it. There were two of them, and he was alone. It might not be entirely safe for him to interfere. He would hardly care to be thrown into a grave and buried there that night. And then, again, Jake was avaricious, and wouldn't care to break friends with those college fellows, for they paid him a good deal of money. On the whole, he was resolved to keep quiet and see the end of the matter.

Joe and Rufus walked two-thirds of the way across the burying ground and stopped. Jake followed at a careful distance, and when he found they had stopped, he crept slowly up on the darkest side, so near that, partly by sight and partly by sound, he could discover what took place. There

was not a loud word spoken, though he occasionally heard them whisper to each other. Then he heard the sound of shovels and the moving of gravel.

"It is true," said Jake to himself, "they are digging a grave!" and the cold sweat started on his forehead. Still he resolved to be quiet and see it all through. Once or twice they stopped and seemed to be listening, as though they thought they heard some noise. Then he could hear them whisper to each other, but could not understand what they said. After they had been digging and throwing out gravel some time, he heard a sound like the light knock of a shovel upon the lid of a coffin.

"Take care," said Joe, in a very loud whisper, "it'll never do to make such a noise as that; it could be heard almost half a mile; do be more careful."

Again they pursued their work, and occasionally a hollow sound like a shovel scraping over a coffin was heard. At length their work of throwing out gravel seemed to be completed; and then there was a pause for some time, interrupted occasionally by sounds of screwing, and wedging, and wrenching; and at last they seemed to be lifting some heavy substance out of the grave. They carried it toward the gate. Jake was lying almost upon the ground, and as they passed near him, he could perceive they were carrying some white object about the length and size of a corpse. They went out at the gate and round to the chaise; and presently they returned again, and appeared by their motions and the sound to be filling up the grave. Jake took this opportunity to go and examine the chaise; and sure enough he found there a full-sized corpse, wrapped in a white sheet, lying in the centre of the chaise, the feet resting on the floor, the body leaning across the seat, and the head resting against the centre of the back part of the chaise.



"Only some scrape of the Doctor's after all," said Jake to himself, who now began to breathe somewhat easier than he had done for some time past. "But it's rather shameful business, though; this must be Deacon Gray's daughter, I'm sure; and it's a shame to treat the old man in this shabby kind of way. I'll put a stop to this, anyhow. Polly Gray was too good a sort of a gal to be chopped up like a quarter of beef, according to my way of thinking, and it shan't be."

Jake then lifted the corpse out of the chaise, carried it a few rods farther from the road, laid it down, took off the winding sheet, wrapped it carefully round himself, went back and got into the chaise, and placed himself exactly in the position in which the corpse had been left. He had remained in that situation but a short time before Joe and Rufus, having filled up the grave and made all right there, came and seated themselves in the chaise, one on each side of the corpse, and drove slowly and quietly off.

"I'm glad it's over," said Rufus, fetching a long breath. "My heart's been in my mouth the whole time. I thought I heard somebody coming half a dozen times; and then it's such a dismal, gloomy place too. You wouldn't catch me there again, in such a scrape, I can tell you."

"Well, I was calm as clock-work the whole time," said Joe. "You should have such pluck as I've got, Rufe; nothing ever frightens me."

At that moment the chaise wheel struck a stone, and caused the corpse to roll suddenly against Joe. He clapped up his hand to push it a little back, and instead of a cold clammy corpse, he felt his hand pressed against a warm face of live flesh. As quick as though he had been struck by lightning, Joe dropped the reins, and with one bound sprang

a rod from the chaise and ran for his life. Rufus, without knowing the cause of this strange and sudden movement, sprang from the other side with almost equal agility, and followed Joe with his utmost speed. They scarcely stopped to take breath till they had run two miles and got into Joe's room at the college, and shut the door and locked themselves in. Here, having sworn Joe's chum to secrecy, they began to discuss the matter. But concerning the very strange warmth of the corpse they could come to no satisfactory conclusion. Whether it could be, that they had not actually taken up the corpse from the grave, but before they had got down to it some evil spirit had come in the shape of the corpse and deceived them, or whether it was actually the corpse, and it had come to life, or whether it was the ghost of Polly Gray, were questions they could not decide. They agreed, however, to go the next morning by sunrise on to the ground, and see what discoveries they could make.

When Jacob Rider found himself alone in the chaise, being convinced that Joe and Rufus would not come back to trouble him that night, he turned about and drove back to the burying ground.

"Now," said Jake, "I think the best thing I can do, for all concerned, is to put Polly Gray back where she belongs, and there let her rest."

Accordingly Jake went to work and opened the grave again, carried the corpse and replaced it as well as he could, and filled up the grave and rounded it off in good order. He then took his horses and chaise and returned home, well satisfied with his night's work.

The next morning, some time before sunrise, and before any one were stirring in the neighborhood, Joe and Rufus was at the old burying ground. They went round the inclosure, went to the tree where they had fastened their horse, and looked on

every side, but discovered nothing. They went through the gate, and across to the grave where they had been the night before. The grave looked all right, as though it had not been touched since the funeral. They could see nothing of the horse or chaise, and they concluded if the corpse or evil spirit, or whatever it was in the chaise, had left the horse to himself, he probably found his way directly home. They thought it best therefore immediately to go and see Jake, and make some kind of an explanation. So they went over immediately to Jake's stable, and found the horse safe in his stall. Presently Jake made his appearance.

"Well, your confounded old horse," said Joe, "wouldn't stay hitched last night. He left us in the lurch, and we had to come home afoot. I see he's come home, though. Chaise all right, I hope."

"Yes, all right," said Jake.

"Well, how much for the ride," said Joe, "seeing we didn't ride but one way?"

"Seeing you rode *part way* back," said Jake, "I shall charge you fifty dollars."

Joe started and looked round, but a knowing leer in Jake's eye convinced him it was no joke. He handed Jake the fifty dollars, at the same time placing his finger emphatically across his lips; and Jake took the fifty dollars, whispering in Joe's ear, "dead folks tell no tales." Jake then put his finger across his lips, and Joe and Rufus bade him good morning.

**CHRISTOPHER CROTCHET :****THE SINGING-MASTER.**

BY SEBA SMITH.

YOUR New England country singing-master is a peculiar character ; who shall venture to describe him ? During his stay in a country village, he is the most important personage in it. The common school-master, to be sure, is a man of dignity and importance. Children never pass him on the road, without turning square round, pulling off their hats, and making one of their best and most profound bows. He is looked up to with universal deference both by young and old, and is often invited out to tea. Or, if he "boards round," great is the parade, and great the preparation, by each family, when their "week for boarding the master" draws near. Then not unfrequently a well fatted porker is killed, and the spare ribs are duly hung round the pantry in readiness for roasting. A half bushel of sausages are made up into "links," and suspended on a pole near the ceiling from one end of the kitchen to the other. And the Saturday beforehand, if the school-master is to come on Monday, the work of preparation reaches its crisis. Then it is, that the old oven, if it be not "heaten seven times hotter than it is wont to be," is at least heated seven times ; and apple-pies, and pumpkin-pies, and mince-pies are turned out by dozens, and packed away in closet and cellar for the coming week. And the "fore room," which has not had a fire in it for the winter, is now duly washed and scrubbed and put to rights, and wood is heaped on the fire with a

liberal hand, till the room itself becomes almost another oven. George is up betimes on Monday morning to go with his hand-sled and bring the master's trunk; Betsey and Sally are rigged out in the best calico gowns, the little ones have their faces washed and their hair combed with more than ordinary care, and the mother's cap has an extra crimp. And all this stir and preparation for the common school-master. And yet he is but an every-day planet, that moves in a regular orbit, and comes round at least every winter.

But the *singing-master* is your true comet. Appearing at no regular intervals, he comes suddenly, and often unexpected. Brilliant, mysterious and erratic, no wonder that he attracts all eyes, and produces a tremendous sensation. Not only the children, but the whole family, flock to the windows when he passes, and a face may be seen at every pane of glass, eagerly peering out to catch a glimpse of the singing-master. Even the very dogs seem to partake of the awe he inspires, and bark with uncommon fierceness whenever they meet him.

"O, father," said little Jimmy Brown, as he came running into the house on a cold December night, with eyes staring wide open, and panting for breath, "O, father, Mr. Christopher Crotchet from Quavertown, is over to Mr. Gibbs' tavern, come to see about keeping singing-school; and Mr. Gibbs, and a whole parcel more of 'em, wants you to come right over there, cause they're goin' to have a meeting this evening to see about hiring of him."

Squire Brown and his family, all except Jimmy, were seated round the supper table when this interesting piece of intelligence was announced. Every one save Squire Brown himself, gave a sudden start, and at once suspended operations; but the Squire, who was a very moderate man, and never

did anything from impulse, ate on without turning his head, or changing his position. After a short pause, however, which was a moment of intense anxiety to some members of the family, he replied to Jimmy as follows:—

“I shan’t do no sich thing; if they want a singing-school, they may get it themselves. A singing-school wont do us no good, and I’ve ways enough to spend my money without paying it for singing.” Turning his head round and casting a severe look upon Jimmy, he proceeded with increasing energy:

“Now, Sir, hang your hat up and set down and eat your supper; I should like to know what sent you off over to the tavern without leave.”

“I wanted to see the singing-master,” said Jimmy. “Sam Gibbs said there was a singing-master over to their house, and so I wanted to see him.”

“Well, I’ll singing-master you,” said the Squire, “if I catch you to go off so again without leave. Come, don’t stand there; set down and eat your supper, or I’ll trounce you in two minutes.”

“There, I declare,” said Mrs. Brown, “I do think it too bad. I do wish I could live in peace one moment of my life. The children will be spoilt and ruined. They never can stir a step nor hardly breathe, but what they must be scolded and fretted to death.”

Squire Brown had been accustomed to these sudden squalls about twenty-five years, they having commenced some six months or so after his marriage; and long experience had taught him, that the only way to escape with safety, was to bear away immediately and scud before the wind. Accordingly he turned again to Jimmy, and with a much softened tone addressed him as follows:—

“Come, Jimmy, my son, set down and eat your supper, that’s a good boy. You shouldn’t go away

without asking your mother or me; but you'll try to remember next time, won't you?"

Jimmy and his mother were both somewhat soothed by this well-timed suavity, and the boy took his seat at the table.

"Now, pa," said Miss Jerusha Brown, "you *will* go over and see about having a singing-school, won't you? I want to go dreadfully?"

"Oh, I can't do anything about that," said the Squire; "it'll cost a good deal of money, and I can't afford it. And besides, there's no use at all in it. You can sing enough now, any of you; you are singing half your time."

"There," said Mrs. Brown, "that's just the way. Our children will never have a chance to be anything as long as they live. Other folks' children have a chance to go to singing-schools, and to see young company, and to be something in the world. Here's our Jerusha has got to be in her twenty-fifth year now, and if she's ever going to have young company, and have a chance to be anything, she must have it soon; for she'll be past the time bime-by for sich things. 'Tisn't as if we was poor and couldn't afford it; for you know, Mr. Brown, you pay the largest tax of anybody in the town, and can afford to give the children a chance to be something in the world, as well as not. And as for living in this kind of way any longer, I've no notion on't."

Mrs. Brown knew how to follow up an advantage. She had got her husband upon the retreat in the onset a moment before, in reference to Jimmy's absence, and the closing part of this last speech was uttered with an energy and determination, of which Squire Brown knew too well the import to disregard it. Perceiving that a storm was brewing that would burst upon his head with tremendous power, if he did not take care to avoid

it, he finished his supper with all convenient despatch, rose from the table, put on his great-coat and hat, and marched deliberately over to Gibbs' tavern. Mrs. Brown knew at once, that she had won the victory, and that they should have a singing-school. The children also had become so well versed in the science of their mother's tactics, that they understood the same thing, and immediately began to discuss matters preparatory to attending the school.

Miss Jerusha said she must have her new calico gown made right up, the next day; and her mother said she should, and David might go right over after Betsey Davis to come to work on it the next morning.

"How delightful it will be to have a singing-school," said Miss Jerusha: "Jimmy, what sort of a looking man is Mr. Crotchet?"

"Oh, he is a slick kind of a looking man," said Jimmy.

"Is he a young man, or a married man?" inquired Miss Jerusha.

"Ho! married? no; I guess he isn't," said Jimmy, "I don't believe he's more than twenty years old."

"Poh; I don't believe that story," said Jerusha, "a singing-master must be as much as twenty-five years old, I know! How is he dressed? Isn't he dressed quite genteel?"

"Oh, he's dressed pretty slick," said Jimmy.

"Well, that's what makes him look so young," said Miss Jerusha; "I dare say he's as much as twenty-five years old; don't you think he is, mother?"

"Well, I think it's pretty likely he is," said Mrs. Brown; "singing-masters are generally about that age."



"How does he look?" said Miss Jerusha; "is he handsome?"

"He's handsome enough," said Jimmy, "only he's got a red head and freckly face."

"Now, Jim, I don't believe a word you say. You are saying this, only just to plague *me*."

To understand the propriety of this last remark of Miss Jerusha, the reader should be informed, that for the last ten years she had looked upon every young man who came into the place, as her own peculiar property. And in all cases, in order to obtain possession of her aforesaid property, she had adopted prompt measures, and pursued them with a diligence worthy of all praise.

"No I ain't neither," said Jimmy, "I say he has got a red head and freckly face."

"La, well," said Mrs. Brown, "what if he has I'm sure a red head don't look bad; and one of the handsomest men that ever I see, had a freckly face."

"Well, Jimmy, how large is he? Is he a tall man, or a short man?" said Miss Jerusha.

"Why, he isn't bigger round than I be," said Jimmy; "and I guess he isn't quite as tall as a hay-pole; but he's so tall he has to stoop when he goes into the door."

So far from adding to the shock, which Miss Jerusha's nerves had already received from the account of the red head and freckly face, this last piece of intelligence was on the whole rather consolatory for she lacked but an inch and a half of six feet in height herself.

"Well, Jimmy," said Miss Jerusha, "when he stands up, take him altogether, isn't he a good-looking young man?"

"I don't know anything about that," said Jimmy, "he looks the most like the tongs in the riddle, of anything I can think of:

26 N. Clark St. Room 4,

CHICAGO, ILL.

J. P. L. A. T. T. \*

‘Long legs and crooked thighs,  
Little head and no eyes.’”

“There, Jim, you little plague,” said Miss Jerusha, “you shall go right off to bed, if you don’t leave off your nonsense. I won’t hear another word of it.”

“I don’t care if you won’t,” said Jimmy, “it’s all true, every word of it.”

“What! then the singing-muster hasn’t got no eyes, has he?” said Miss Jerusha; “that’s a pretty story.”

“I don’t mean, he hasn’t got no eyes at all,” said Jimmy, “only his eyes are dreadful little, and you can’t see but one of ’em to time neither, they’re twisted round so.”

“A little cross-eyed, I s’pose,” said Mrs. Brown, “that’s all; I don’t think that hurts the looks of a man a bit; it only makes him look a little sharper.”

While these things were transpiring at Mr. Brown’s, matters of weight and importance were being discussed at the tavern. About a dozen of the neighbors had collected there early in the evening, and every one, as soon as he found that Mr. Christopher Crotchet from Quavertown was in the village, was for having a singing-school forthwith, cost what it would. They accordingly proceeded at once to ascertain Mr. Crotchet’s terms. His proposals were, to keep twenty evenings for twenty dollars and “found,” or for thirty and board himself. The school to be kept three evenings in a week. A subscription-paper was opened, and the sum of fifteen dollars was at last made up. But that was the extent to which they could go; not another dollar could be raised. Much anxiety was now felt for the arrival of Squire Brown; for the question of school or no school depended entirely on him.

"Squire Brown's got money enough," said Mr. Gibbs, "and if he only has the will, we shall have a school."

"Not exactly," said Mr. Jones; "if *Mrs.* Brown has the will, we shall have a school, let the Squire's will be what it may."

Before the laugh occasioned by this last remark had fully subsided, Squire Brown entered, much to the joy of the whole company.

"Squire Brown, I'm glad to see you," said Mr. Gibbs; "shall I introduce you to Mr. Christopher Crotchet, singing-master from Quavertown."

The Squire was a very short man, somewhat inclined to corpulence, and Mr. Crotchet, according to Jimmy's account, was not quite as tall as a hay-pole; so that by dint of the Squire's throwing his head back and looking up, and Mr. Crotchet's canting his head on one side in order to bring one eye to bear on the Squire, the parties were brought within each other's field of vision. The Squire made a bow, which was done by throwing his head upward, and Mr. Crotchet returned the compliment by extending his arm downward to the Squire and shaking hands.

When the ceremony of introduction was over, Mr. Gibbs laid the whole matter before Mr. Brown, showed him the subscription-paper, and told him they were all depending upon him to decide whether they should have a singing-school or not. Squire Brown put on his spectacles and read the subscription-paper over two or three times, till he fully understood the terms, and the deficiency in the amount subscribed. Then without saying a word, he took a pen and deliberately subscribed five dollars. That settled the business; the desired sum was raised, and the school was to go ahead. It was agreed that it should commence on the following evening, and that Mr. Crotchet should board with

Mr. Gibbs one week, with the Squire the next, and so go round through the neighborhood.

On the following day there was no small commotion among the young folks of the village, in making preparation for the evening school. New singing-books were purchased, dresses were prepared, curling-tongs and crimping-irons were put in requisition, and early in the evening the long chamber in Gibbs' tavern, which was called by way of eminence "the hall," was well filled by youth of both sexes, the old folks not being allowed to attend that evening, lest the "boys and gals" should be diffident about "sounding the notes." A range of long narrow tables was placed round three sides of the hall, with benches behind them, upon which the youth were seated. A singing-book and a candle were shared by two, all round the room, till you came to Miss Jerusha Brown, who had taken the uppermost seat, and monopolized a whole book and a whole candle to her own use. Betsey Buck, a lively, reckless sort of a girl of sixteen, who cared for nobody nor nothing in this world, but was full of frolic and fun, had by chance taken a seat next to Miss Jerusha. Miss Betsey had a slight inward turn of one eye, just enough to give her a roguish look, that comported well with her character.— While they were waiting for the entrance of the master, many a suppressed laugh, and now and then an audible giggle, passed round the room, the mere ebullitions of buoyant spirits and contagious mirth, without aim or object. Miss Jerusha, who was trying to behave her prettiest, repeatedly chided their rudeness, and more than once told Miss Betsey Buck, that she ought to be ashamed to be laughing so much; "for what would Mr. Crotchet think, if he should come in and find them all of a giggle?"

After a while the door opened, and Mr. Christopher Crotchet entered. He bent his body slightly

as he passed the door, to prevent a concussion of his head against the lintel, and then walked very erect into the middle of the floor, and made a short speech to his class. His grotesque appearance caused a slight tittering round the room, and Miss Betsey was even guilty of an incipient audible laugh, which however she had the tact so far to turn into a cough as to save appearances. Still it was observed by Miss Jerusha, who told her again in a low whisper that she ought to be ashamed, and added that "Mr. Crotchet was a most splendid man; a beautiful man."

After Mr. Crotchet had made his introductory speech, he proceeded to try the voices of his pupils, making each one alone follow him in rising and falling the notes. He passed round without difficulty till he came to Miss Betsey Buck. She rather hesitated to let her voice be heard alone; but the master told her she must sound, and holding his head down so close to hers that they almost met, he commenced pouring his faw, sole, law, into her ear. Miss Betsey drew back a little, but followed with a low and somewhat tremulous voice, till she had sounded three or four notes, when her risible muscles got the mastery, and she burst out in an unrestrained fit of laughter.

The master looked confused and cross; and Miss Jerusha even looked crosser than the master. She again reproached Miss Betsey for her rudeness, and told her in an emphatic whisper, which was intended more especially for the master's ear, "that such conduct was shameful, and if she couldn't behave better she ought to stay at home."

Miss Jerusha's turn to sound came next, and she leaned her head full half way across the table to meet the master's, and sounded the notes clear through, three or four times over, from bottom to top and from top to bottom; and sounded them

with a loudness and strength fully equal to that of the master.

When the process of sounding the voices separately had been gone through with, they were called upon to sound together ; and before the close of the evening they were allowed to commence the notes of some easy tunes. It is unnecessary here to give a detailed account of the progress that was made, or to attempt to describe the jargon of strange sounds, with which Gibbs' hall echoed that night. Suffice it to say, that the proficiency of the pupils was so great, that on the tenth evening, or when the school was half through, the parents were permitted to be present, and were delighted to hear their children sing Old Hundred, Mear, St. Martin, Northfield, and Hallowell, with so much accuracy, that those who knew the tunes, could readily tell, every time, which one was being performed. Mrs. Brown was almost in ecstasies at the performance, and sat the whole evening and looked at Jerusha, who sung with great earnestness and with a voice far above all the rest. Even Squire Brown himself was so much softened that evening, that his face wore a sort of smile, and he told his wife " he didn't grudge his five dollars, a bit."

The school went on swimmingly. Mr. Crotchet became the lion of the village ; and Miss Jerusha Brown "thought he improved upon acquaintance astonishingly." Great preparation was made at Squire Brown's for the important week of boarding the singing-master. They outdid all the village in the quantity and variety of their eatables, and at every meal Miss Jerusha was particularly assiduous in placing all the good things in the neighborhood on Mr. Crotchet's plate. In fact, so bountifully and regularly was Mr. Crotchet stuffed during the week, that his lank form began to assume a perceptible fulness. He evidently seemed very fond

of his boarding place, especially at meal time ; and made himself so much at home, that Mrs. Brown and Jerusha were in a state of absolute felicity the whole week. It was true he spent two evenings abroad during the week, and it was reported that one of them was passed at Mr. Buck's. But Miss Jerusha would not believe a word of such a story. She said "there was no young folks at Mr. Buck's except Betsey, and she was sure Mr. Crotchet was a man of more sense than to spend his evenings with such a wild, rude thing as Betsey Buck." Still, however, the report gave her a little uneasiness ; and when it was ascertained, that during the week on which Mr. Crotchet boarded at Mr. Buck's he spent every evening at home, except the three devoted to the singing-school, Miss Jerusha's uneasiness evidently increased. She resolved to make a desperate effort to counteract these untoward influences, and to teach Miss Betsey Buck not to interfere with other folk's concerns. For this purpose she made a grand evening party, and invited all the young folks of the village, except Miss Buck, who was pointedly left out. The treat was elaborate for a country village, and Miss Jerusha was uncommonly assiduous in her attentions to Mr. Crotchet during the evening. But to her inexpressible surprise and chagrin, about eight o'clock, Mr. Crotchet put on his hat and great coat and bade the company good night. Mrs. Brown looked very blue, and Miss Jerusha's nerves were in a state of high excitement. What could it mean ? She would give anything in the world to know where he had gone. She ran up into the chamber and looked out from the window. The night was rather dark, but she fancied she saw him making his way toward Mr. Buck's. The company for the remainder of the evening had rather a dull time ; and Miss Jerusha passed almost a sleepless night.

The next evening Miss Jerusha was early at the singing-school. She took her seat with a disconsolate air, opened her singing-book and commenced singing Hallowell in the following words:

“As on some lonely building’s top,  
The sparrow tells her moan,  
Far from the tents of joy and hope,  
I sit and grieve alone.”

On former occasions, when the scholars were singing before school commenced, the moment the master opened the door they broke off short, even if they were in the midst of a tune. But now, when the master entered, Miss Jerusha kept on singing. She went through the whole tune after Mr. Crotchet came in, and went back and repeated the latter half of it with a loud and full voice, which caused a laugh among the scholars, and divers streaks of red to pass over the master’s face.

At the close of the evening’s exercises Miss Jerusha hurried on her shawl and bonnet, and watched the movements of the master. She perceived he went out directly after Betsey Buck, and she hastened after them with becoming speed. She contrived to get between Miss Buck and the master as they walked along the road, and kept Mr. Crotchet in close conversation with her, or rather kept herself in close conversation with Mr. Crotchet, till they came to the corner that turned down to Mr. Buck’s house. Here Mr. Crotchet left her somewhat abruptly, and walked by the side of Miss Betsey toward Mr. Buck’s. This was more than Miss Jerusha’s nerves could well bear. She was under too much excitement to proceed on her way home. She stopped and gazed after the couple as they receded from her; and as their forms became indistinct in the darkness of the night, she turned and followed them, just keeping them in view till they reached the house. The door opened, and to



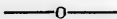
her inexpressible horror, they both went in. It was past ten o'clock, too! She was greatly puzzled. The affair was entirely inexplicable to her. It could not be, however, that he would stop many minutes, and she waited to see the result. Presently a light appeared in the "fore-room;" and from the mellowness of that light a fire was evidently kindled there. Miss Jerusha approached the house and reconnoitred. She tried to look in at the window, but a thick curtain effectually prevented her from seeing anything within. The curtain did not reach quite to the top of the window, and she thought she saw the shadows of two persons before the fire, thrown against the ceiling. She was determined by some means or other to know the worst of it. She looked round the door-yard and found a long piece of board. She thought by placing this against the house by the side of the window, she might be able to climb up and look over the top of the curtain. The board was accordingly raised on one end and placed carefully by the side of the window, and Miss Jerusha eagerly commenced the task of climbing. She had reached the top of the curtain and cast one glance into the room, where, sure enough, she beheld Mr. Crotchet seated close by the side of Miss Betsey. At this interesting moment, from some cause or other, either from her own trembling, for she was exceedingly agitated, or from the board not being properly supported at the bottom, it slipped and canted, and in an instant one half of the window was dashed with a tremendous crash into the room.

Miss Jerusha fell to the ground, but not being much injured by the fall, she sprang to her feet and ran with the fleetness of a wild deer. The door opened, and out came Mr. Crotchet and Mr. Buck, and started in the race. They thought they had a glimpse of some person running up the road when

they first came out, and Mr. Crotchet's long legs measured off the ground with remarkable velocity. But the fright had added so essentially to Miss Jerusha's powers of locomotion, that not even Mr. Crotchet could overtake her, and her pursuers soon lost sight of her in the darkness of the night, and gave up the chase and returned home.

Miss Jerusha was not seen at the singing-school after this, and Mrs. Brown said she stayed at home because she had a cough. Notwithstanding there were many rumors and surmises afloat, and some slanderous insinuations thrown out against Miss Jerusha Brown, yet it was never ascertained by the neighbors, for a certainty, who it was that demolished Mr. Buck's window.

One item farther remains to be added to this veritable history; and that is, that in three months from this memorable night, Miss Betsey Buck became Mrs. Crotchet of Quavertown.



## POSTSCRIPT.

BY MAJOR DOWNING.

WHEN a lady or a politician writes a letter, you may generally expect the most important idea to come into the postscript, jest as the newspaper folks put in a postscript for the latest news, and sometimes "stop the press" to announce it. Whether my postscript here will be the most important thing in the book, is not for me to say; but it *is the latest news*, so I've stopt the press to put it in.

*The American Review* for June has made an outrageous attack upon Daniel Webster, and my literature. It is a *whig* Review, and therefore thinks Daniel Webster is small potatoes. It is a *literary* Review, and therefore thinks my literature is

worse than nothin. According to my notion, Daniel is able enough to hoe his own potatoes, and therefore I shant answer for him ; but I have a word or two to say for myself. What is one's meat is another's pisen ; and if the American Review don't like my literature, it is because he doesn't know what is good, for every body else eats it and likes it. But let us see what the Review has to say about me.

[From the American Review for June, 1845.]

"AMERICAN LETTERS.—Is there an American school of writers ? None, certainly, unless they who degrade and vulgarise the tongue, and the taste of the country by performances, the whole merit of which consists in their adoption of particular local slang (such as was employed in Major Downing's Letters, or in the lucubrations of Sam Slick) are the models of a new and noble literature that is to be for us. When these things shall found for us a *learning*, the Ethiopian Minstrels will create for us a Music, and the disciples of Jim Crow a Theatre of our own."

I am willing to believe, after reading the Publisher's Preface to this little book, that there is a Downing school of literature in the country, and that I had something to do with it. But I did not know, before the American Review said so, that mine was the *only* "American school of writers." The New-York Evening Gazette copies the paragraph from the Review, and makes the following remarks about it, which I think prove that the Gazette can tell a hawk from a handsaw if the Review cant.

[From the Evening Gazette.]

"The writer of the above amusingly confounds 'learning' with *genius* in the quoted sentence ; just as he elsewhere in the same article confounds the *honor* which the production of some great poem may confer upon the land which produced it, with the *poetic associations* wherewith a song-writer like Burns may clothe that land. We may never, in this country, produce an Epic that will live ; we may never, in these United States, give birth to a Homer, a Milton, or Tasso, whose world-renown may proudly reflect upon ourselves. But, a hundred songs, from anonymous pens if you choose, having half the merit of those which have given a mystic charm to the *braes* and brooksides of the land of Burns, would still associate a *poetic feeling* with the soil, that might be worth all the glory of an Epic.

"In a word, we may be *nationalized* in literature as well through our affections as through our intellect; just as we may be more bound together by the characteristic strains of a few national airs than by the production of an opera;—while the organ of those airs, if they come from among the *many*, will speak more for the general musical feeling of the people than the composition of the grandest overture from the hand of a Master.

"The learned Dr. Julius, who was sent here by the King of Prussia, to make notes upon certain institutions of our country, carried home with him a scroll of these very 'Ethiopian songs,' at which this Reviewer sneers, as affording proof as striking as it was interesting, that we had the germs of a national music among us; and when his large collection of minerals, pamphlets, &c., &c., was destroyed in the great fire of New-York, as he was on the eve of sailing for Europe—the worthy Doctor, in trying to replace what he could, was particularly careful to supply the place of those humble ditties which had shared the fate of the vast mass of interesting materials which he had been so indefatigable in bringing together for his royal master.

"And now, as to the 'Jack Downing and Sam Slick literature,' which this sage Reviewer thinks has the one sole mission of vulgarizing the tongue and the taste of the country. We are not unwilling to admit that it may have, in some degree, produced this effect; but we care not for a small evil if it be inseparable from a great good. And this 'literature' has done good; for if not the first sign of *our intellectual independence*, it certainly has aided vastly in breaking the servile chain of provincial imitation. It established the independent Republic of American jokedom upon the ruins of transplanted cockneyism."

Now, as for this ere difficulty between me and the editor of the American Review, I shant stop to have any very long yarn about it. If I was a *great writer*, as he is, I'd go at him pell-mell and raise such a dust about his head that he couldn't be seen again this six months. But I'm only a plain, blunt man, that speaks right on, and tells folks what they already know. I'm something like that old Roman that Mr. Shakspeare tells about—for I do read Shakspeare sometimes in winter evenings, and like it, it's full of meat as an oyster—so I say I'm something like that old Roman, "for I have neither wit, nor worth, nor words, action, nor utterance, nor

power of speech to stir men's blood ;" and all I can do is to point my adversary to the pens of his editorial brethren, " poor, poor, dumb mouths, and bid them speak for me."

The New-York Mirror,—I mean the old Mirror—five or six years ago, speaking of some of my writings published at that time, says :

" These are the most graphic and really the best Yankee papers we have ever seen, or expect to see, let who will write them. Their author has struck at a new line in literature, more piquant, racy, and original, than that adopted by ' Boz.' We like him none the less for being ' native here, and to the manor born ;' for we are among those who can appreciate a good production, even before it has received the commendation of foreign critics."

The New-York Morning Despatch, April 22, 1839, speaking of the same writings, says :

" The author has the richest and most natural Yankee dialect of any writer who has attempted to give the peculiarities of Jonathan. The wit is real, attic, and something more than poor orthography."

The New-Yorker, May 25th, 1839, speaking of the same writings, says :

" It is enough to observe that they emanate from the pen of the original author of the Jack Downing Letters. His Yankee stories and style are very diverting, and possess an originality and fidelity, which are not discernable in the writings of a numerous horde of imitators."

The New-York Courier and Enquirer, July 3, 1839, speaks of the same writings as follows :

" There is no doubt that the author of this little volume is the best painter of Yankee peculiarities that ever wrote. He is true to nature and never caricatures, but without caricaturing, is most amusing."

There, I might go on in this way and fill up another book. But I shan't do it ; for if the American Reviewer won't believe the witnesses I've already brought up, I don't spose he would believe it if my dear old friend the General should come back and tell him he was a goose.

So I shall here bid my readers good-by till next time.

THE END.



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